



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN
OREGON NOW

3/19/25

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards,

On behalf of the Oregon National Organization for Women (NOW) Legislative Task Force, we issue our strong support of House Bill 2541. This act would extend critical workplace protections to agricultural workers, ensuring they have the right to express breast milk during work hours. This bill is essential for promoting the health and dignity of farmworker mothers and their children and we believe it is a necessary step toward achieving equity in Oregon's workforce.

Currently, certain agricultural workers, particularly those employed as hand harvesters or pruning laborers on a piece-rate basis, are excluded from protections that allow for milk expression. House Bill 2541 seeks to close this gap, providing these mothers with the same rights to lactation accommodations as other workers in Oregon. Breastfeeding offers vital health benefits for both mothers and babies. This bill would ensure that farmworker women have the support they need to continue breastfeeding while working. Many mothers, particularly those in seasonal agricultural work, face significant challenges when it comes to returning to work and breastfeeding. The need for lactation accommodations is especially urgent for farmworker women, who are more likely to need to return to work shortly after childbirth due to economic pressures. Without the support of adequate accommodations for milk expression, these workers are forced to choose between their health, their child's health, and their economic survival—choices that no parent should have to make.

Providing adequate workplace accommodations for lactating mothers, especially those in seasonal agricultural work, is crucial to their health and well-being. This bill would ensure that no mother is forced to choose between her health, her child's health, and her livelihood. We urge your support for HB 2541 to ensure that all workers, regardless of industry, have the right to express milk in a private and reasonable space during work hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Caldwell

Oregon National Organization for Women, Board Member

Oregon NOW Legislative Task Force