

Submitter: Kim McCarty
On Behalf Of: Tenants
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548
TO: House Committee on Rules
FROM: Kim McCarty
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 2548 -7

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kim McCarty, I live in Portland for a Statewide tenant advocacy and support organization the Community Alliance of Tenants. I am writing testimony in strong support of HB 2548 -7 to conduct a study on Oregon farmworkers and learn about their experiences at the workplace.

There are over 72,000 Oregon farmworkers, who put food on our tables and contribute over \$6.8B to our state's economy, yet they earn an average of just \$34,500 annually. Most farmworkers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America, many of whom speak an Indigenous language.

Farmworkers and farmworker advocates brought forward a policy to establish a workforce standards board in Oregon. Unfortunately, it is not moving forward this session. While farmworkers and immigrants face attacks from the federal administration, the Oregon legislature has the opportunity to learn about the challenges farmworkers are facing.

HB 2548 -7 will help inform the legislature and the general public about the conditions that farmworkers are facing in the workplace. By funding a study through Portland State University, this bill puts the voices of workers at the center of policymaking while also including the perspectives of farmers. This is how we create lasting, effective change through listening, research, and engagement.

Many of the people we serve are tenants. I support pursuing a Farm worker Report. We need to know more about economic conditions. The cost of housing is causing widespread displacement and poverty for our farm worker communities that are spending much of their earnings on housing. If wage conditions do not keep pace with expenses, such as housing we will see fewer people available to work in Oregon in critical jobs.

Accurate data will tell us what wages are needed to meet current expenses and what expenses may need regulation.

I urge you to support HB 2548 with the -7 amendment and invest in Oregon's ability to understand and serve the people who feed our state.

Sincerely,

Kim McCarty
Executive Director
Community Alliance of Tenants