



House Committee on Rules

May 29, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB 2548

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee, my name is Kathy Lara, Policy Analyst for the Oregon Center for Public Policy.

On behalf of the Center, I urge you to support HB 2548, with the -7 amendment, which would create an invaluable report on the experiences and working conditions of farmworkers. HB 2548, as amended, is a necessary step to fully capture and understand the realities facing one of Oregon's most critical workforces. This study will help highlight the unique, often precarious conditions agricultural workers face that other data sources aren't designed to capture.

HB 2548 with the -7 amendment will allow for a more reliable and accurate picture of Oregon's farmworker population. Currently there is a lack of data on Oregon's migrant and domestic farmworkers. Answering even the simple question of "How many farmworkers are there in Oregon?" is difficult. The difference between the USDA's Census of Agriculture and the Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages is roughly twenty thousand. If we don't even have a basic count of farmworkers, imagine how little information we have on their working conditions.

This study can also address the lack of research into the daily realities and working conditions of farmworkers. The data that exists is often [limited in scope](#), [can exclude H-2A workers](#), and [aggregates information into regions encompassing multiple states](#), rather than focusing on [Oregon farmworkers](#). This report represents a rare and necessary investment in understanding the full picture of farmworker labor conditions. Specifically, this report will illuminate experiences, such as treatment from Farm Labor Contractors, what workplace benefits exist and whether workers can actually access them, and workplace safety, among other experiences.

Our mission is to achieve economic justice for all Oregonians through research, analysis, and advocacy.

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As amended, HB 2548 will fill in crucial gaps in farmworker voices. By allowing for direct engagement with farmworkers through interviews and focus groups, the report can illustrate how agricultural work shapes workers' livelihoods, health outcomes, financial security and stability, and their treatment in the workplace.

Good information is the foundation for good public policy. HB 2548, as amended, will provide policymakers a more accurate view of the lives and working conditions of Oregon's farmworkers. Such information will help deliver better policy outcomes for both workers and the agricultural economy.

We urge you to support HB 2548, as amended.

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