

Submitter: Devon Lawson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4013

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Devon Lawson. I am testifying in strong support of HB 4013.

This bill is a preventative measure. It ensures that no matter what happens in Washington, D.C., the safety and education of Oregon's children remain protected.

We are seeing a volatile regulatory environment at the federal level. There are active, well-funded national campaigns (such as Project 2025) seeking to dismantle the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and roll back child labor protections. If the federal government suddenly decides that 14-year-olds should work until midnight on school nights, Oregon should not automatically follow suit. HB 4013 asserts our state sovereignty. It says that the standards we have today, which businesses are already complying with, are the floor. It prevents "regulatory whiplash" and ensures that Oregon, not D.C., decides what is safe for our kids. Importantly, this bill aligns with current state law regarding non-agricultural employment. It does not upend the traditions of family farming; it targets the industrial and service sectors where exploitation is most likely to interfere with schooling.

We know that when the labor market is tight, low-wage industries look for a "reserve army of labor." If they cannot find adults, they look to children. This bill is a firewall. It prevents the market's logic from devouring the potential of our youth. As the Oregon PTA testified, we cannot claim to value education if we allow students to be so exhausted that they can no longer keep their eyes open in class. By locking in the 3-hour limit on school days, we are declaring that a child's primary job is learning, not generating profit for a fast-food franchise.

We are not asking for new, burdensome regulations today. We are simply locking the door before the storm arrives. We are securing the status quo against a "race to the bottom."

HB 4013 is a common-sense shield. It protects our businesses from uncertainty, our state from federal overreach, and most importantly, our working-class children from exploitation.

I urge a "Yes" vote.

Thank you.