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House Republicans propose the Oregon solution to agriculture overtime

SALEM, Ore. – House Republican members of the House Committee on Business and Labor announced an Oregon solution for mandatory agriculture overtime pay to benefit both employees and farms.

A February 8 public hearing held by the House Committee on Business and Labor received testimony from more than 100 individuals with comments or concerns about a proposal mandating overtime pay in agriculture. More than 70 Oregonians and farmers from across the state spoke to the uniqueness of agriculture in Oregon and the need for fixes to the agriculture overtime proposal. Around 20 labor union representatives and their allies supported the proposal without changes.

Republican members of the committee introduced a [-1 amendment](#) with three elements for an agriculture overtime proposal. These changes incorporate a year of comments from a diverse range of Oregonians and reflects Oregon's unique agriculture industry:

- Flexibility in hours during peak harvest weeks – Recognizing that nature dictates hours of work is similar to legislation passed in Hawaii and Colorado.
- Increase standard hours available to employees from 40-hours to 50-hours - Aligning the threshold of hours with the demands of the state's growing season is similar to Maryland, Minnesota and Colorado laws.
- Exempts livestock - Hours of care for dairy cows, sheep and other animals cannot be predicted or fit into a standard workday. Federal law, Oregon law and other states treat livestock differently to guarantee access to care for the health of livestock.

“These are three elements to a proposal to create an Oregon solution for agriculture overtime,” said Representative Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles) who serves as co vice-chair. “Let’s learn from what other states have done and incorporate feedback we’ve received from Oregonians. We have an opportunity to make this a workable solution for

our state that benefits both employees and farms. Without these changes we will only cause harm to both by reducing employee hours and increasing labor costs.”

“We need this Oregon solution that reflects our unique state and the unpredictability of agriculture,” added Representative Shelly Boshart Davis (R-Albany). “These fixes are carefully crafted to avoid unintended consequences for Oregon’s farmworkers and our family farms and ranches. We invite our colleagues to join us by passing an Oregon version of agriculture overtime that supports jobs and preserves family farms.”

“An overtime threshold that ignores the complexities of Oregon agriculture and fails both our farms and employees is not the solution Oregonians deserve,” said Representative Jami Cate (R-Lebanon). “We need to truly heed the testimony of those directly responsible for implementing this policy on our farms and pass the solution Oregonians expect - balancing the needs of our farms and employees. Anything less is a disgrace to the confidence voters put in this Legislative body.”

“These fixes reflect input from Oregonians as well as the complex and unique nature of our state’s agriculture,” added Representative Jessica George (R-St. Paul). “Oregon agriculture requires an Oregon solution that protects employee salaries and farms. That’s what this amendment represents.”

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