

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing:

My name is Johanna Davis.. I am a resident of Belfast, ME and I am testifying in support of LD 398 and LD 525.

It is time for all employees in the state of Maine to receive the same basic rights. This includes the right to organize, minimum wage and over time pay. All other employees in this state are given these basic rights, farm workers deserve them too.

Farming is a hard business. As a farm owner and co-manager of a Maine farm for 12 years I know this first hand. Money can be tight, stress is high and a lot of things are uncontrollable. However, this should not mean that we as employers must build our businesses on the grounds of human exploitation. That is not success.

While extending wage and overtime rules to farm workers may result in an increase in operating costs to some farms, in the entirety of a farm budget this increase is small. There are creative ways to manage a thriving farm in the face of this and similar yearly cost increases. While minimum wage and overtime guarantees will be a helpful improvement for many workers the phased in implementation represents a fairly modest yearly raise relative to the cost of inflation.

Its time to finally stop the exploitation and instead show respect for the people who work so hard so that we can eat.

I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 398 and LD 525.

Thank you,

Johanna Davis

songbird.farm@yahoo.com

207-380-1117