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LD 2273

I am writing in reference to LD 2273. This bill as written, represents a step in the right direction, i.e., recognizing that agricultural workers are as important (if not more important) than other hourly workers in the State of Maine. Guaranteeing them the State minimum wage and some protections under the law, in regard to minimum wage and overtime restrictions is long overdue.

My concern is about enforcement of this law, which discriminates against farm workers. If there is abuse, whether intentional or not, the workers themselves are unable to petition for enforcement, leaving it up to the Department of Labor--already overstretched--to investigate or seek redress.

I strongly urge the members of the committee to bring farm workers in alignment with other Maine workers who can initiate complaints on their own or with the assistance of other third party advocates.