



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony  
in Opposition to

**LD 357 An Act to Establish a State Minimum Hourly Wage for Agricultural Workers**  
**LD 588 An Act to Enact the Agricultural Employees Concerted Activity Protection Act**  
**LD 589 An Act to Make Agricultural Workers and Other Related Workers Employees Under the Wage and Hour Laws**

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, I am State Representative Mark Cooper, of District 107, part of Windham. I am here to present my opposition to **LD 357 An Act to Establish a State Minimum Hourly Wage for Agricultural Workers**, **LD 588 An Act to Enact the Agricultural Employees Concerted Activity Protection Act** and **LD 589 An Act to Make Agricultural Workers and Other Related Workers Employees Under the Wage and Hour Laws**.

These bills would cripple an already struggling industry by hamstringing the farmer/owners by adding minimum wage and overtime requirements for their employees. Farms are typically exempt from these labor laws because they pay employees based on productivity and seasonal implications. The minimum wage requirement versus piecework pay is unfair. For example: Suzy works 8 hours and picks two bushels of apples and gets paid the same as Sam who works 8 hours and picks 8 bushels. Many employees get paid well over the Maine minimum wage because they are good workers. From personal experience, I can tell you that many farms also provide workers lodging and food packages that are not part of a wage structure, but should be noted as a valuable benefit. The current structure works for each individual agricultural business.

I stand in firm opposition to all three of these bills for sake of the Maine farming community.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,

Mark C. Cooper  
State Representative