

Matthew Manson
Blackie's Farm Fresh Produce

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and members of the committee, my name is Matthew Manson and I am testifying against LD 1022, and Act to Make Agricultural Workers and Other Workers Employees under the Wage and Hour Laws.

I have one worker that comes to my 30 acre vegetable farm on the H2A visa. This is my second year in the program. Getting into the program has made a huge difference on my farm. Jermaine is a huge asset to what we can do in our small operation. Jermaine is here from May to November and the entire time that he is here there is not a week that he works that he does not get 40+ hours a week, often getting 60+. He enjoys the work and is very good at it, the more hours I can give him the more he will work and the happier he is. I think that enacting a law that requires overtime pay is going to limit my ability to give an employee over 40 hours a week. We as small businesses simply can not afford to pay the overtime. The logical thing to me would be to add employees and pay them only 40 hours which in turn would limit his ability to make the amount of money that he would like for a season. I also feel that if this is the case that farms will have a hard time getting workers on the H2A visa because they will not want to come up here for 40 hours a week when they are used to many more. People need to realize that these are seasonal, not year-round jobs. It is extremely hard to find someone to work for 6 months a year. I am urging you to oppose the bill LD 1022. I am a small operation that it will a great effect on. I can only imagine the effect on larger operations around the state will not be able to sustain if this goes through. Thank you.