

Larry Scott
Waldoboro

To Rep. Harnett and members of the Labor and Housing Committee,

I am writing in regards to LD1022 (An Act to Make Agricultural Workers and Other Worker Employees under the Wage and Hour Laws) and LD 151 (An Act to Protect Farm Workers by Allowing Them to Organize for the Purpose of Collective Bargaining).

My sons and I are 4th and 5th generation wild blueberry growers, in Waldoboro. My family sells both commercial wholesale and fresh pack retail berries. We have always depended on local rakers (consisting of mostly ages 12-16) to help with the harvest. Traditionally this has been paid on a piece-work basis. This is many youths first job where they learn responsibility (getting to work on time, respect, teamwork and pride for a job well done) and the harder you work the more you earn. Work ethics and drive are what makes the money, age and gender make no difference. We have had a small 12 year old girl, earn more than a rugged 17 year old boy, because of their focus, drive and goal. Not all youth have the drive - many times we have had first time workers, that we spent more time coaching and encouraging, than getting productivity. This is our investment in helping them become productive and successful workers for the future.

I feel that by setting a minimum wage, some would go along for the free ride-No more "Reap what you sow" with the incentive to work harder.

I think it would be a shame because of a set wage, to take away the chance for our youths to earn money based on their productivity, when in reality we could be better off, to eliminate the rakers and go mechanical harvesting.

As far as allowing for Collective Bargaining I feel it should be taken into consideration the difference of a year round factory farm and a seasonal farm.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Larry G. Scott