

Kitty Wilkin  
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My name is Kitty Wilkin. I am a resident of Monroe and I am submitting this testimony in favor of LD 1022 - An Act to Make Agricultural Workers and Other Workers Employees under the Wage and Hour Laws. When first looking into this Act, my reaction was to think about my farmer friends and how this might create hardship for an already under-supported livelihood. However, after more reflection and discussion, it became clear that it comes down to a matter of farm owner's livelihoods on one hand, and agricultural workers' lives on the other. Predominantly white money vs. predominantly Black and Brown lives. The agricultural system in the US is built upon underpaid/virtually free labor, and the fact that these workers are often mostly Black and Brown folks makes it one of the foundational pillars of systemic racism in our country. Cultural change is necessary in order to dismantle white supremacy, and while it would support everyone more to begin at the top and subsidize small local farmers over corporations, that issue is not on the table. This Act to Make Ag Workers and other Workers Employees under the Wage and Hour Laws is, and I strongly believe it should be supported. Passing LD 1022 is a necessary step toward creating a just and antiracist society where all workers are paid a living wage. Thank you for your time.