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Bowdoinham

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and members of the committee, my name is Ian Jerolmack and I am testifying against LD 1022, and Act to require overtime pay.

I have a small organic vegetable farm in Bowdoinham. My wife and I have no other job. We have 5 kids. We employ 2 people year round, and 4 to 5 more for the 8 months of season.

Our American workers don't wish to work more than 40 hours, so the point there is moot. But if our farm ran on just local Americans, we believe we would be sunk.

Foreign workers not only are much more willing to do this work, they want it, and prefer it, and thrive in it. They often become repeat if not life long employees for farms... we have one man who is with us for the 7th season (out of 13 for us).

These H2A workers are the hard won worker visa solution that American agriculture has considered absolutely necessary, if we are to be able to continue to keep agriculture viable in the 21st century. LD1022 would have us pay them time and half, of the "Adverse Effect Wage" which is the minimum we are allowed to pay them as per H2A rules. This year, we pay them \$14.99 minimum wage! If we have to pay \$22.49/ hour to them after 40 hours, we would be totally sunk. If we hire a greater number of workers instead, and keep them at 40 hours, we pay PER VISA, AND are required to house them all and transport them all, from and to Mexico, and from and to the store every week. So my expenses go up 50%

But none of this, is to mention the REAL consequence: If we reduced H2A workers to 40 hours, they would not come. Almost every H2A worker in the USA comes, to work many many hours, and save and save, and then go home. Not only would my workers lose 33% of their income by reducing their hours from 60, to 40; but they would be bored. They are living here on the farm to work. Their home, is Mexico. They have no family here with them to spend that time with, no friends, most don't speak the language.

The entire formula by which we have bent over backwards to comply with, in order to bring foreign workers here, is undermined. We as visa based farms, are left with no solution. What do you have to offer us? Who do you think wants to work here? Will you? Will your kids?

If you take away my guys being able to work 60 hours (many wish to work 7 days! and we do not allow it) you take away our work force. And if you think Americans are waiting in the wings for these jobs, then I don't think you read the news.