



OREGON'S SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Frontline At-Risk Manual (FARM) Laborers Protection Act

The Problem

America's agriculture workers—who are essential to enabling families across America to keep food on the table during the coronavirus crisis—urgently need legislation to help address the increased risk they are taking on during the COVID-19 pandemic. Agriculture workers have a critical need for additional protections, compensation, and health and safety protections so that they can safeguard themselves, their families, other workers, and the stability of the food supply amid the pandemic.

The *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* provided \$23.5 billion to support agricultural producers. But unlike other forms of industry support, the rescue funds did not require recipients to take any particular steps to support their workers. Agriculture workers are expected to ensure our food security, but they lack certain employment-based benefits. Their work for this country should be respected and honored, and they should have the resources and safeguards they need in place to stay safe and healthy.

By The Numbers

- **96.6% of all farmworkers** work in farms that have fewer than 50 employees.
 - Under the *Families First Coronavirus Act*, employers with fewer than 50 employees may deny paid sick leave under certain circumstances without any need to seek permission from Department of Labor (DOL).
- **Over 10,000:** The number of meat handling workers that have been infected or exposed.
- **70%** of farmworkers, or roughly 1.2 to 1.75 million workers, are undocumented.

The Solution

To support ongoing efforts to help agricultural producers through this crisis, it is critical to recognize that our nation's food security depends on the ability of agriculture workers—regardless of immigration status—to work safely to produce our nation's food.

- This bill requires agricultural producers (regardless of the number of employees) who receive future direct agriculture-specific COVID-19 to do the following:
 - **Provide sick pay** for 10 paid days of sick leave.
 - **Provide pandemic premium pay at an additional \$13 per hour** for agriculture workers, acknowledging the personal risk of maintaining the nation's food supply during the pandemic.
 - Make efforts to maintain payrolls and **limit agriculture worker layoffs and furloughs**.
 - **Implement CDC recommendations** on sanitation and social distancing in work sites, employer-provided housing, and transportation.
- The bill also **provides grants to agricultural producers** to support in providing premium pay and purchasing of handwashing stations, portable restrooms and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Endorsed by: United Farm Workers (UFW), UFW Foundation, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), Farmworker Justice, Causa Oregon, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Foundation, Unite Oregon and Unete Center for Farm Worker Advocacy, Environmental Working Group, and Justice for Migrant Women.