

Memorandum in support

A.1867/S.2247

Enacts the *Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act*, removing the legislative exclusions denying farmworkers the right to collective bargaining, a day of rest, overtime pay, disability and unemployment insurance, etc.

Rural & Migrant Ministry, a multi-faith organization that serves farmworkers throughout New York, raises its voice in support of the *Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act*.

The Ministry is the official arm of the following religious bodies:

- Capital Area & Mid-Hudson Baptist Associations
- The Presbyteries of Albany and Hudson River
- New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
- The Regional Synod of New York, Reformed Church in America
- The Episcopal Diocese of New York
- The Roman Catholic Dioceses of Albany and Rochester
- New York Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends (Quakers)
- New York Conference of the United Church of Christ

In their name, we ask the legislature to change those laws that deny farmworkers the same rights and protections as most other laborers in New York. We firmly believe it is the just and right thing to do.

We have heard representatives of Agribusiness point out:

- That farmworkers are treated like family.
- The men and women who farm in New York are hard working.
- That there are farmworkers who are satisfied with conditions.
- That removing the exclusions would ruin agriculture in New York.

None of these issues is the issue before you and the residents of this state. The basic issue before us is **that the law is unequal**. New York gives basic human rights and protections to most of its residents, but excludes the farmworkers.

We treat farmworkers, people who are also hard working men and women, who also contribute to our economy, pay taxes and raise wonderful children, as second-class citizens. We depend on them for our well being, and when they ask to be treated fairly – we say, **NO**. This is immoral and unjust. There can be no justification for this unequal treatment. Attempts at justification of this exclusion are offensive.

Rural & Migrant Ministry has remained constant in our belief that everybody in New York must be treated equally. Let us remove the exclusions, and ensure that the law is just and equal. Allow us to say with moral certainty that New York honors the dignity of all.