



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Announces Disastrous Farm Labor Bill Defeated

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO April 26, 2010

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ALBANY – State Senator Michael Nozzolio recently declared a major victory on behalf of the Upstate New York agriculture industry, when the Farm Labor Bill that would have devastated Upstate’s farming industry was defeated in the Senate’s Agriculture Committee.

“The effects of this ill-conceived legislation would have been catastrophic to our State’s top industry. This was a clear example of Downstate legislators not understanding the unique needs of our Upstate farms. Thousands of farms would have gone under. Countless jobs at local farms, processing plants, and farm supply businesses would have been lost,” said Senator Nozzolio.

The legislation (S.2247), defeated in the Agricultural Committee, would have mandated collective bargaining, established strict work week schedules, regulated hourly pay rates, and required farmers to pay unemployment insurance for seasonal migrant workers.

“This Farm Labor Bill would have created the most repressive labor mandates in the entire country. This would have added devastating costs to New York’s more than 35,000 farms. There is no question that farms would be shut down for good, and the economic fallout would send shockwaves across the entire state,” said Senator Nozzolio.

In January, the bill cleared the Senate Labor Committee and was fast tracked to be voted on by the full Senate. It wasn't scheduled for an Agriculture Committee review until Senator Nozzolio and several of his colleagues intervened and demanded that this disastrous bill be referred so that the public would have the opportunity weigh in on the legislation. During the deliberations, the New York State Farm Bureau joined Senator Nozzolio in his opposition this disastrous proposal in order to protect New York's farmers and their ability to compete in an increasingly difficult and competitive agricultural industry.

Although the farm labor bill was voted down, the committee did vote in favor of a bill that Senator Nozzolio has strongly supported which would reduce taxes, fees and mandates for farmers. The Farmer Tax, Fee and Mandate Relief Act will help farmers ensure their land is recognized as part of an agricultural district, obtain tax credits for farm investments, exempt farm wineries from sales tax reporting requirements, ease corporation filing fees for farmers and reduce permit fees with the Department of Environmental Conservation. That bill will now be reported to another committee.

"We must do everything we can to support our Upstate farmers. If we are going to turn the economy around in our region, our agriculture industry must be a part of it. I am pleased that the Farm Labor Bill was defeated, and now we must turn our attention to the promotion and strengthening of our agricultural sector," concluded Senator Nozzolio.