



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

## Aubertine: Reconstituted Farmworker Bill Skirts Process to the Detriment of Farmers, Farm Workers, Consumers

DARREL J. AUBERTINE May 12, 2010

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ALBANY (May 12, 2010)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine said today that with the reintroduction of the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act, which is identical but for cosmetic changes to the bill defeated in the Agriculture Committee last month, he will as chair of the committee fight any attempt to subvert the legislative process that the previous bill went through.

“It’s disheartening that advocates for this legislation after suffering a defeat refuse to accept the fact that this bill went through an open process, was considered and defeated by a majority of senators,” Sen. Aubertine said. “Up to now a majority of Senators who have voted on this bill, voted against this bill. The process was set up by the Senate to deal with these bills and the process worked. There really is no substantive change between this legislation and the legislation that went down to defeat.”

The bill, like its identical predecessor, would add onerous new regulations and mandates on the state’s dwindling number of farms, large and small, with or without full-time employees, as well as increased payroll expenses. The Senator visited farms and met with agricultural interests across the state last fall to discuss agriculture issues, including this legislation, and held a public hearing in Watertown that included discussion on the issue.

The Senate Agriculture Committee held a public hearing on March 1 exclusively on this legislation to gather input from supporters and critics of the bill and on April 20 it was defeated in committee nearly unanimously with just one of nine committee members voting in favor of the legislation.

“I will continue to fight for the rights of farmers, farm workers and consumers to see that this legislation undergoes the same deliberative and open process,” Sen. Aubertine said. “They drafted this legislation all over again without any input from agriculture, agribusiness and as far as I can tell, the farm workers themselves. If you read the bill, it’s clear that there have been zero attempts at compromise here. I, along with the members of the Senate Agriculture Committee, the New York Farm Bureau and farmers across the state, have clearly and publicly stated our willingness to address any real and substantive issues regarding the rights of farm workers through an open deliberative, process that directly meets the needs of farmers, farm workers and consumers.”

The legislation submitted as S.7787 is identical to the defeated S.2247-B, except that it changes the term “farm workers” to a composite “farmworkers,” removes the capitalization from the title of the bill, changes “he” and “his” to gender neutral “he or she” and “his or her” and adjusts some of the legalese from “paragraph” to “subdivision” and numeric subdivisions to alphabetical, such as changing “(1)” to “(A).” It also adjusts the effective dates in the bill to “April 1, 2010” to “the 30<sup>th</sup> day after it shall have become law” and “April 1, 2011” to “July 1, 2011.”