



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

Letter to the Editor: Farmworkers deserve fairness

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT April 3, 2016



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Farmworkers deserve fairness

By Sen. Adriano Espaillat

Manhattan: Farmworker disenfranchisement is rooted in the Jim Crow era; their unfair treatment continues to be a lasting legacy of those times. Farmworkers toil in harsh, often unsafe, conditions from sunup to sundown, providing us with our food. I, along with a diverse coalition including the Hispanic Federation, NYCLU, NYS Catholic Conference, Rural

and Migrant Ministries, the AFL-CIO and many more, have advocated for the Farmworker's Fair Labor Practices Act, which would give farmworkers the same basic rights as all other workers.

The bill, which I sponsor in the Senate, was approved by the Senate Labor Committee last year by an overwhelming 12 to 4 vote and has passed the Assembly on multiple occasions. Yet it has not come for a vote on the floor of the Senate since 2010. The last major legislative victory for farmworkers was in 1999, with their inclusion in the state's minimum wage law. That law means that field hands will now benefit from the higher minimum wage we approved as part of next year's budget. But otherwise, farmworkers are left behind. The people who grow our food can't be starved of decent treatment.