



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

## **Sen. Espaillat, Cardinal Dolan, and Advocates Applaud Gov. Cuomo's Support of Farmworkers' Right to Organize**

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**(New York, NY)**- State State Senator Adriano Espaillat, Assembly Member Catherine Nolan, Cardinal Timothy Dolan and advocacy groups, that have long fought for equal rights for farmworkers, applauded Governor Cuomo's support of Farmworkers' right to organize and renewed their call for passage of the the Fairworkers Labor Practices Act.

The bill would grant collective bargaining rights to farm laborers, require they are provided at least 24 hours of consecutive rest each week, and also extend overtime provisions to this industry. The legislation also contains provisions to include farm workers in a variety of unemployment and sanitary laws.

"I want to thank Governor Cuomo for supporting farmworkers' right to organize. For too long, farmworkers have been denied basic rights, including the right to organize. As has been the case for generations of workers, the right to organize will help farmworkers fight for the better benefits and wages they deserve. It is time for Senate Republicans to bring the Farmworkers' Fair Labor Practices Act to the floor, so farmworkers are finally treated fairly under the law. We now have 29 co-sponsors on the bill, and it has passed the Labor Committee by a vote of 12-4, showing bi-partisan support. This legislation deserves an up or down vote in the Senate." said State Senator Adriano Espaillat, the sponsor of the Farmworkers' Fair Labor Practices Act (S.1291) in the New York State Senate.

"Farmworkers deserve the same labor protections that other workers currently receive" said Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Assembly Sponsor of the bill. "It is an injustice to think that in 2016, farmworkers are still fighting for basic equality under the law. I welcome Governor Andrew Cuomo's support on this issue and I hope that we can finally bring dignity to these workers that have been forgotten for so long."

"Governor Cuomo's support for farmworkers' right to organize is welcomed and encouraging. For years, the Catholic Church has advocated for equal rights and fair treatment for farmworkers, and today we took a step toward fairness and justice. Now as the Legislature continues to consider the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act, I hope that the Governor's opinion this week is a strong reminder that the most basic rights should be equally granted to all workers. It is a

human rights issue," said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York.

"We thank Governor Cuomo for his support of farmworkers' right to collectively bargain, and NYCLU for taking on this fight. This is an important step, and Hispanic Federation remains committed to ensuring the full rights and protections of farmworkers are enacted in New York State. We call on the New York State Legislature to follow the Governor's important step and pass legislation that grants farmworkers the basic rights afforded to all workers in our state," said José Calderón, President, Hispanic Federation

"During his lifetime Robert F. Kennedy fought tirelessly alongside movement leaders to seek justice and fairness for America's agricultural workers. Nearly 50 years later New York farmworkers still lack even the most basic labor rights, and it is high time we take action to ensure the dignity that farmworkers deserve as they work tirelessly to provide the nourishment on the plates our families every day," said Wade McMullen, Managing Attorney at Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights.

"We welcome the governor and Attorney General's support for our claims and now look forward to concrete action that will unequivocally protect farmworkers' right to organize. We cannot claim progress until we put a stop to the brutal conditions and discriminatory treatment of New York's 60,000 farmworkers and treat all workers with dignity and respect," Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union.

"Rural & Migrant Ministry celebrates the growing commitment of the Governor toward ensuring protection while bargaining collectively for New York's farmworkers. For over twenty years we have worked to right this wrong, adding our voices to the voices of the farmworkers. We look forward to not the removal of this unjust exclusion, but the removal of all exclusions through the passage, and signing by the Governor, of the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act," said the Rev. Richard Witt, Executive Director of Rural & Migrant Ministry.

The Farmworkers' Fair Labor Practices Act (S.1291) passed the labor committee last month for this second time this legislative term by a super majority of 12-4 (includes AYES and AWRs). With the addition of State Senator Todd Kaminsky, the bill now has 29 co-sponsors, among in most of any bill in the Senate.

The same-as Assembly version of the bill A.4762, sponsored by Assembly Member Nolan, has passed that body multiple times.

According to a 2012 State Comptroller report, there are over 36,000 farms spread throughout New York's 62 counties which produce over \$4.7 billion in product