

JUSTICE FOR FARMWORKERS



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With Assembly Passage and Strong Senate Support, Long-Awaited Justice for Farmworkers Nears

The Justice for Farmworkers Campaign celebrated news that the New York State Assembly stood once more for dignity and equality for all workers by passing the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act (A.1856/S.2247). The FFLPA would remove the labor law exclusions that for too long have denied farmworkers the basic rights enjoyed by other workers in New York state. Assembly sponsor Catherine Nolan (Queens- D) withstood tremendous and at times inflammatory attempts to turn back the equal rights bill.

Opposition to the bill was engineered by the New York Farm Bureau, whose fear-stoking propaganda and doomsday projections for the state's \$5 billion agriculture industry failed to sway the Assembly.

The bill has wide support in the Senate—over 40 members from both parties and from upstate, the NYC/metro area, and Long Island have indicated their support. The Senate companion bill resides in the Codes Committee. It is sponsored by Senators Breslin and Onorato, and a vast array of 28 total cosponsors from both parties.

Meanwhile, Justice for Farmworkers Campaign spokesman Jordan Wells said of today's Dairy Day festivities, "New York milk tastes salty with the sweat of farmworkers who are denied even the most basic protections." New York's dairy industry has received just shy of \$300,000,000 in subsidies from the federal government since 2000, second only to Wisconsin. This figure includes \$41 million in 2006.

Farmworkers and supporters from the faith community will hold a vigil for justice on Wednesday at 1 PM near the Farmers Market on Union Square in Manhattan. They will be joined by Kerry Kennedy, founder of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights.