

Carrie Horne
Appleton
LD 525

Testimony in Support of LD 525 “An Act to Protect Farm Workers by Allowing Them to Organize for the Purposes of Collective Bargaining”

April 17, 2023

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing,

I am writing today in support of LD 525: “An Act to Protect Farm Workers by Allowing Them to Organize for the Purposes of Collective Bargaining”.

I was surprised to learn that agriculture workers have less protections and rights than workers in other industries in Maine to negotiate their contract with their employers. This seems unfair and inequitable to me. The rights to organize a worker’s union and participate in collective bargaining are not protected for farm workers as they are for other workers, and therefore are very dangerous for them to pursue. If farmworkers could have the right to organize and join a union, they would be able to negotiate with their employers to make their jobs safer and more equitable. With protections from employer intimidation and fear of retaliation, farm workers could advocate for fair wages, reasonable schedules, safe working conditions, and humane housing accommodations. Without explicit protection from the state, farm workers can be fired for advocating for better conditions and fair labor practices. Giving workers the opportunity to organize leads to a healthier, happier, more productive workforce.

This bill will ultimately help all workers, agricultural businesses, groceries and consumers in Maine by providing fair, safe and equitable employment for our Maine farm workers.

Sincerely,
Carrie Horne
Resident of Appleton Maine