

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,

My name is Claire Horne and I’m a resident of Appleton, ME. I am writing today to encourage you to join me in support of LD 525: “An Act to Protect Farm Workers by Allowing Them to Organize for the Purposes of Collective Bargaining”.

There are many ways that agriculture workers in Maine have less protections and rights than workers in other industries. The rights to organize a worker’s union and participate in collective bargaining are not protected for farm workers, and therefore are very dangerous for them to attempt. 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, which I think should be a human right for all workers regardless of industry. Giving workers the opportunity to organize leads to a healthier, happier, more productive workforce, and agriculture workers deserve this just as much as any other Maine worker.

I believe all workers should have the right to collective bargaining. It is unfair and unjust that farm workers do not have the right to speak up and demand essentials like safe conditions and fair pay without risking their livelihood, housing, and physical safety. I hope you agree, and will support LD 525.

Sincerely,
Claire Horne

Claire Horne
Appleton
LD 525

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