Angela Baglione Monroe - Rural Anti-Racism Action Group

As a farm owner who, prior to owning a farm, spent many years employed on others' farms all over New England, I have seen firsthand the ways in which a lack of fair labor laws directly impacts the way farm workers are treated. Once, when calculating my hourly pay based on the stipend I was offered, I discovered I was making roughly \$2.50 an hour. It is only right for me to acknowledge that the reason I was able to survive on that wage was because I came to farming with an extensive safety net. My whiteness and upper-middle class upbringing allowed me to pursue farming as a passion, not out of necessity, and that pursuit did not leave me without basic essentials. As we all know, our country's history of undervaluing the labor of those who produce our food is long, horrific, and ongoing. It is time that we right some of those wrongs by making moves to value that labor going forward, and the actual human beings behind it. We all need to eat, and we all rely on farm workers - especially Black, brown, and other people of color - whether we realize it or not. This bill would allow these truly essential workers to thrive on the wages they are paid doing the work that keeps our country and our world alive.