

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

My name is Michael Schaab and I live in Monroe, Maine. As a concerned citizen I strongly support the passage of LD 1483 (An Act to Protect the Rights of Agricultural Workers Sponsored by Craig Hickman). The two essential components of this bill are clear. (1) Farm workers should have the right to key service providers and health care providers without interference from their employers. (2) Farm workers cannot be prevented from entering or leaving THEIR residence by anyone other than the agricultural employee themselves.

Aren't these rights that most of us take for granted? Have you ever been denied the right to seek key services to address your health and welfare? Would you be surprised if anyone attempted to keep you from leaving or entering your home? Why are these rights not extended to farm workers – a key component of our labor force? These workers are a vulnerable segment of our population kept in this condition by overtly and specifically barring them from having the same rights as ALL other people here in Maine. We must all ask ourselves “What is the reasoning and where is the morality behind the lack of these protections for farm workers?”

The conditions stipulated in this bill make this legislation fair to all parties – not placing any undue burden on either employer or employee. This legislation will provide for rights that ALL People should enjoy. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of passing this bill.