



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pedro Espada Jr.

Farm Workers Rights Rally Today

PEDRO ESPADA, JR. June 15, 2010

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Espada Introduces New Bill That Would Provide Basic Protections to State's Farm Workers as Kerry Kennedy Set to Lead Rally Today in Albany

ALBANY NEW YORK, JUNE 15, 2010—State Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada, Jr. has introduced new proposed legislation that would provide basic labor protections to farm workers throughout the state. The proposed bill was introduced by Sen. Espada Monday, the day before Kerry Kennedy, founder of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights, is scheduled to lead a rally in Albany in support of labor protections for farm workers.

The key elements of Sen. Espada's new **Farm Workers Fair Labor Practices Act** (S8166) would require owners of farms to:

- Provide farm workers with a voluntary day, or 24 consecutive hours, of rest once every seven days worked.
- Pay farm workers overtime wages at one and one-half times the normal pay rate for all hours logged after 60 hours per week.

In addition, the proposed bill would expand the current unemployment insurance protections applicable to farm laborers and would provide for greater eligibility for workers' compensation benefits.

Sen. Espada introduced the new legislation as Kennedy was set to lead farm worker advocacy organizations, labor leaders and legislators – including Espada and his colleagues in the Legislature, Senators Ruben Diaz, Sr. and George Onorato and Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan – in a rally at West Capitol Park this afternoon (Tuesday, June 15) at 1:15 p.m. in support of labor protections for farm workers.

“This proposed legislation would provide farm workers with the most basic labor rights that every other New York laborer has known for decades. The horses that toil in Central Park have more rights and protections than the state’s farm workers. Even the horses receive mandatory days off,” Sen. Espada said.

“My proposed bill would insure long overdue protections for farm workers – men and women who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity as they work hard to support their families and provide most of the food that we put on the table for our own families,” Sen. Espada said.

He vowed to make this one of his legislative priorities before the close of the legislative session this month. #