



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

## 3.19.19 - Akshar and Colleagues Call for Multiple Public Forums Over Impending Ag Legislation

FRED AKSHAR March 19, 2019

| ISSUE: **FAMILY FARMS, AGRICULTURE**



Senator Fred Akshar and his colleagues in the Senate called for multiple public forums to be held in various rural communities so that residents may properly ask questions and voice their opinions regarding the [Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act](#).

The Act, which was proposed by Sen. Jessica Ramos of Queens, would make sweeping changes to the state's agriculture industry and allow seasonal, part-time workers to unionize,

leading to higher labor costs for family farms.

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*Senator Fred Akshar said, "Before government goes charging ahead to implement more misguided policy with unintended, yet disastrous consequences, we need to listen to the people this proposal will hurt. I challenge our colleague from Queens to visit Upstate, visit our rural communities and listen to our struggling farmers and the agricultural workers they employ. Through regulation, taxes and lack of affordability, New York continues to drive farmers and their families out of business and out of our state. Let's do our due diligence beforehand and listen to the people this legislation will affect before piling yet another onerous burden on those struggling to survive in New York."*

In a study conducted by Farm Credit East, it is estimated that the Fair Farmworkers Labor Practices Act would add at least \$299 million of costs on the backs of New York's farming community, which would reduce net farm income by a staggering 23 percent.

Senator Robert Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda) said, "Owning and running a successful farm in New York has become more difficult than ever before. In the last five years, approximately 20 percent of New York's dairy farms have been forced to close their doors, and legislation like the bill being proposed by Sen. Ramos would be the final nail in the coffin for countless other family-owned farms across our state. It is paramount that a thorough round of public forums are held from Niagara County to Suffolk so that those communities that will be impacted most by this legislation have their opportunity to let legislators know that they think."

Senator Pam Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua) said, "Agriculture is the leading industry in the Wayne-Finger Lakes region. With the Farm Fair Labor Practices Act, farms simply will not be able to afford to operate and will eventually close their doors. After meeting with various farmers and agri-business owners, it is clear that this legislation not only significantly

impacts our farmers, farmer workers, and their families but also businesses, tourism, and consumers in our region and across New York State.”

Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) said, "The misguided and misrepresented Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act poses an extreme action at a time of already severe economic struggle for New York State farmers. Worse, the Act’s consequences would produce a nightmare of a ripple effect across local communities in every region of this state and profoundly diminish the future of high quality, local food production."

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S2837**

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- Introduced
  
- ○ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Enacts the farmworkers fair labor practices act, granting collective bargaining rights, workers' compensation and unemployment benefits to farmworkers

January 29, 2019

In Senate Committee [Labor](#)

Sponsored by [Jessica Ramos](#)

Do you support this bill?