



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Akshar and Colleagues: Why the Lack of Statewide Agriculture Hearings on Farmworker Labor Legislation?

FRED AKSHAR April 8, 2019

| ISSUE: **FARMING, AGRICULTURE**



Today, Senator Fred Akshar and his Senate Republican colleagues raised concerns over the release of hearings surrounding the proposed [Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act](#).

In a letter to the respective Chairs of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Senate Labor Committee, they questioned the limited scope of only holding three hearings, which are set to take place in Nassau, Sullivan, and Madison Counties. The Capital Region, Hudson Valley,

North Country, Southern Tier, and Western New York – along with farm industries specific to those regions – will be without input into the sweeping legislation.

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"Before passing legislation that could drastically change the lives of thousands of Upstate farmers and their families, the New Senate Democrat leadership should at the very least agree to go out and meet with the people their proposals would affect," said Senator Akshar. "The 52nd Senate District I represent contains more farms per capita than any senate district in the entire state, and I find it unconscionable that the Chairs of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Senate Labor Committee would refuse to set foot in our community and listen to our farmers' needs."

"It's disheartening to see that Senate Democrats ignored our request to host statewide hearings on the proposed farmworkers unionization legislation," said Sen. Rob Ortt. "This legislation will dramatically impact the leading industry across much of New York. Considering the grave harm it could have on our state's small family farms, hard-working farm employees, and consumers, it's unfathomable that entire geographic regions and sectors of agriculture are excluded from the discussion. Once again, I am calling on both Senators to expand their planned schedule and include hearings in the Capital Region, Hudson Valley, North Country, Southern Tier, and Western New York."

Signing the letter were Senators Rob Ortt, Pamela A. Helming, Robert E. Antonacci, Rich Funke, George A. Amedore Jr., Chris Jacobs, Sue Serino, James N. Tedisco, Daphne Jordan, and Betty Little. Last month, Sen. Akshar and his Senate colleagues authored a letter to the Agriculture and Labor chairs requesting that community hearings be held across the entire state. In a study conducted by Farm Credit East, it is estimated that the Farmworkers Fair

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.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S2837

- 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

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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](#)

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Do you support this bill?