



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt, Colleagues, and Experts Hold Roundtable

ROBERT G. ORTT May 2, 2019

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, FARMWORKER FAIR LABOR PRACTICES ACT, FFLPA**

On Thursday evening, Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda) hosted an agriculture roundtable in Batavia for colleagues, industry experts and residents from across western New York. As Ranker of the New York State Senate Committee on Agriculture, Sen. Ortt has spent the last few weeks visiting, touring, and speaking with farmers from across western New York about newly proposed labor laws and wanted to bring together as many individuals from the agriculture community as possible.

“The purpose of this roundtable was to gain additional insight and inform our local residents and the media on how impactful pending labor legislation could be to our small family farms,” said Sen. Ortt. “We wanted to draw on these farm owners’ and farmworkers’ expertise, and we wanted to offer them an opportunity to voice their concerns and speak with their elected representatives about what can be done to stop newly proposed labor laws. The sponsor of this new labor legislation and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture have refused to hold any hearings in western New York, so we have taken it upon ourselves to give these farm owners, farm workers, farm bureaus and elected officials an opportunity to voice their opinions.”

Recently introduced labor legislation by Senator Jessica Ramos, of Queens, would force farm owners to pay overtime to seasonal workers who surpass a daily hour limit, require

mandatory days off and allow workers to strike. A study by Farm Credit East indicates that this legislation would increase labor costs by an estimated 17 percent and decrease net farm income by approximately 23 percent. In total, the legislation is expected to cost the farming community a total of \$299 million.

“With so many small family farms struggling to survive, this legislation would put an end to local farming in New York as we know it,” said Sen. Ortt. “The farm closure rate in New York is currently three times the national average and legislation like that proposed by Sen. Ramos would increase this farm closure number exponentially. It would also drive away our best workers who seek to work as many hours as possible. If capped at 40 hours per week, seasonal employees will look to other states for more work.”

Senate Bill 2837, The Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act (FFLPA), currently resides in the Senate Labor Committee.

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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

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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](#)

Sponsored by [Jessica Ramos](#)

Do you support this bill?