



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jessica Ramos

Farmworkers in New York Win a Path to a 40 Hour Workweek

JESSICA RAMOS January 29, 2022

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QUEENS, NY— Following weeks of testimony to the Farm Laborers Wage Board, a path to lower the overtime threshold to 40 hours/week has finally been established. In response to the news, State Senator Jessica Ramos (D, WF - SD13) issued the following statement:

“In my freshman year in the Senate, I inherited the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act. A piece of legislation that had never had a Senate hearing, and had been passed from Senator to Senator. I was the 7th Senator to carry the bill, and I vowed to be the last.

In my campaign for its passage, I visited dozens of farms in more than eight counties and spoke to hundreds of workers and farmers throughout the state. Through the historic passage of that legislation, the Department of Labor established a wage board that brings farmers and their employees to the table. The workers at Pindar Vineyards in Nassau County have organized the first union in New York’s history with RWDSU Local 338. Throughout the pandemic, the agricultural industry and labor of this workforce kept New Yorkers fed. We have a moral obligation to these workers.

Every win for this workforce is a continuation of an effort to right a legacy of racist wrongs. Farmworkers and domestic workers were excluded from sweeping labor protections because of Jim Crow cutouts, all but ensuring a majority Black workforce were left vulnerable to the

brutalities of necessary work that our entire society relies on. Today's decision brings farmworkers up to the level that was made for the rest of us more than a hundred years ago. The fight for the 40-hour workweek was based on eight hours of work, eight hours of leisure, and eight hours of sleep to ensure workers are afforded a life that is whole.

The people who do this work are not disposable, and their labor is not their only purpose in life. They are human beings who deserve time and pay that allows for a full life. This path to 40 is a recognition of their humanity.”

The policy approved by the wage board scales back the working hours from 60 to 40 hours/week over a ten-year period. The phase-in schedule will begin in 2024 with a 56/hour week, [per the DOL's website](#).

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