



SB 104 (STEINBERG) SUPPORT

March 2, 2011

Senator Ted Lieu
Chair, Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee
1020 N Street, Room
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 104 (Steinberg) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Lieu:

We are writing to request your support for SB 104 – Fair Treatment for Farm Workers Act, a bill the United Farm Workers is sponsoring. This Act simply extends collective bargaining rights for California’s farm workers that are currently afforded to the state public employees responsible for overseeing California’s agricultural industry who work in the Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, the Department of Water Resources, the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Exposition and State Fair, and the Agricultural Labor Relations Board.

Farm workers have been singled out for decades: excluded from the National Labor Relations Act, the Federal Insecticide Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and Federal Child Labor laws. Even today, California’s overtime laws don’t apply in the same way as they apply to all other workers.

Farmers benefit from over \$21 billion in taxpayer subsidies, which include \$417 million in water subsidies every year in the Central Valley alone and the “Exemption for State sales taxes for tractors and farm vehicles” – a tax break worth well over \$100 million each year.

With more than 400,00 farm workers – most employed by a corrupt farm labor contractor system – working on more than 80,000 farms, timely enforcement of these laws is impossible to achieve and too expensive to afford.

The human beings who torture their bodies, sacrifice their youth, and numb their spirits to produce California's great agricultural wealth, a wealth so vast that it feeds all of America and much of the world, deserve better.

SB 104, the Fair Treatment for Farm Workers Act is about self-help. Cesar Chavez always said that the government could only do so much. You can give us the laws, but it's up to farm workers to enforce those laws and protect themselves through self-help collective action.

We ask for your support.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arturo S. Rodriguez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Arturo S. Rodriguez
President

cc: Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee
Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg

UNITED FARM WORKERS

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