

# Testimonies

## Farmworkers

- ***“ We are however, considered more like a machine, the system keeps us oppressed and subjugated to the will of the grower. We are rarely able to have our voices heard to bring to light the inhuman working and living conditions we experience in the labor camps. . . . We farmworkers know we are an important part of food production and of the economy in general of this country. We want to be treated like the other workers and we feel our insistence to be included in all of the labor laws in the same way as other workers is fair”*** (Farmworker testimony before The New York Senate-Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Forces Joint Temporary Task Force on Farmworker Issues held a hearing in April 1994)
- ***“To deny us these basic rights is, in many cases, to deny us the possibility to demand medical services, better living conditions, and the possibility of bettering our lives”*** (Testimony before the The New York Senate-Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Forces Joint Temporary Task Force on Farmworker Issues held a hearing in April 1994)
- ***“We went as a group to talk to the boss. When I asked him, he said: “Your fired” and then he said: “there’s no more work.” And he told us to get off the farm.”*** (Orange County farmworker) (THE VOICE)
- ***“I remember once when I got together with my brothers and other farmworkers to talk to the farmer about not paying us the price he agreed to. He fired us all and told us to abandon his camp that same day”*** (Monroe County farmworker (THE VOICE)
- ***“Because of fear of being fired, we didn’t say anything”*** (Orange county farmworker testimony before Joint Senate Hearing, Albany 2000)
- ***“We need your help to change the laws, and to enforce them so we can be treated like human beings”***(Ulster County farmworker) (THE VOICE)
- ***Farmworkers do not speak up for their rights because of fear of getting fired. In the onions the owners know each other and communicate with one another to make sure that whoever speaks up for their rights can be denied to work at any other farm. I would like to tell you that we are humans, we are not slaves, it is true that we work because we need the job. Everything would be better if we had right salaries and just laws for everyone.”*** (Orange County farm worker testifying before the Joint Hearing of the New York State Senate Committees on Agriculture and Labor on Farmworkers ( Warwick, 2000)
- ***“Only you(the Senate) can make a difference and change the laws so that we are treated fairly. If you do not take a stand for justice for farmworkers, you are condemning farmworkers and their families to a life of misery. If we are treated with dignity and respect, it would have a positive effect on us and make us more productive. The increase in food production will benefit all of us” .”*** (Orange County farm worker testifying before the Joint Hearing of the New York State Senate Committees on Agriculture and Labor on Farmworkers ( Warwick, 2000)

## Agriculture Business

- ***“I understand these people. . . No one pick more cotton than I do. . . . They(the farmworkers) are very happy”*** (Wofford B. Camp, a cotton farmer in California in the 1930’s in response to John Steinbeck’s book THE GRAPES OF WRATH ( OBSCENE in the EXTREME, Rick Wartzman page 26)
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- ***Agriculture in this state is in transition”*** (Farm Bureau State Priority Issue 2000 “Understanding the Agricultural Workforce”)
- ***“More farms are lost due to low prices, weather disasters and retiring farmers every year”*** (Farm Bureau State Priority Issue 2000 “Understanding the Agricultural Workforce”)
- ***“Our industry simply cannot afford a quick and simplistic regulatory or legislative “fix”. . .*** (John Lincoln, President of the New York Farm Bureau, February 9, 2000)