



2026.26

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FULL ORGANIZING AND CARD CHECK RIGHTS FOR WASHINGTON STATE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

WHEREAS, the federal National Labor Relations Act of 1935 explicitly excluded agricultural workers from collective bargaining protections, an exclusion rooted in Jim Crow-era compromises by Southern lawmakers who refused to extend rights to workers in jobs associated with those recently emancipated from slavery; and,

WHEREAS, nearly a century later, this exclusion persists at the federal level, leaving agricultural workers as one of the only categories of private-sector workers in the United States without enforceable collective bargaining rights; and,

WHEREAS, while Washington state law permits agricultural workers to unionize, there is no enforceable mechanism for union elections, certification, or employer recognition, leaving workers who seek to organize with a loose formal process and no recourse when employers refuse to recognize their unions; and,

WHEREAS, without an enforceable framework, farmworkers who seek to organize have been forced to rely solely on strikes, boycotts, and years of costly litigation; and because justice delayed is justice denied, such delay only deepens harm and instability for workers and employers alike; and,

WHEREAS, Washington state's agricultural workers contribute billions of dollars to the state economy, sustaining industries including tree fruit, dairy, wine grapes, hops, vegetables, and other crops that are foundational to rural communities; and,

WHEREAS, card check recognition, which allows a union to be certified when a majority of workers sign authorization cards, is a proven, efficient, and democratic method of establishing worker representation that reduces opportunities for employer intimidation and coercion during drawn-out election campaigns; and,

WHEREAS, the continued denial of organizing rights to agricultural workers perpetuates a legacy of racial exclusion that demands correction; now therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO (WSLC), declares its full support for legislation granting Washington's agricultural workers enforceable collective bargaining rights, including card check recognition, union certification, and good-faith bargaining, administered and enforced by the state Public Employment Relations Commission; and be it finally,

RESOLVED, that the WSLC will work with its affiliates, the United Farm Workers, Familias Unidas por la Justicia, and allied organizations to build a broad coalition in support of such legislation and will actively lobby, testify, and mobilize its membership for its passage.

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