



**New York Farm Bureau**

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# **MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT**

**Assembly Bill 2662 (Assemblymember Bichotte) / Senate Bill 583 (Senator Benjamin)**

## **AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO ETHNIC OR RACIAL PROFILING**

**Date: 2/8/2021**

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New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization would like to express its support for this legislation. This bill addresses an important – and urgent – need for farm employees in rural areas of the State. This legislation seeks to remedy what has now become a statewide issue spanning all ethnicities. New York's farm families depend upon a workforce that is increasingly ethnically diverse. New York Farm Bureau members strongly oppose the practice of racial profiling, as our employees are dramatically affected by this unjust practice.

In rural areas, particularly during the influx of employment for the planting and harvesting season, farm employees are routinely targeted for enforcement merely because of their ethnicity. This racial profiling is egregious and harmful to the farm employee. Frequently, the law enforcement agency involved is the Immigration and Naturalization Services or the U.S. Border Patrol, now referred to as the Department of Homeland Security. However, we are also aware of the direct cooperation that exists in certain areas between local, state, and federal law enforcement officials and are aware of instances in which local law enforcement collaborate to stop farm employees solely based on ethnicity.

Farm employees, because of a language barrier and a fear of law enforcement agencies due to sometimes questionable documentation, are particularly vulnerable to racial profiling. New York Farm Bureau members can elaborate on tragic stories of both blockades, traffic stops, and on-farm "raids" wherein the ethnic employees are taken away to the nearest detention center, processed, and the farmer is left arguing with officials to release the employees, or simply trying to verify their whereabouts.

New York Farm Bureau policy strongly opposes racial profiling, and the blatant violations of basic civil rights. Our members strongly recommend a review of racial profiling in the state; New York Farm Bureau encourages the statistical record keeping required in this legislation to better publicize the moral injustice of racial profiling, even in rural areas of the State.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your support for this bill.