

County Farmworker Bill of Rights Policy Proposal

Establish a Farmworker Ombudsman office in the county who will manage a single local hotline for farmworkers to report labor violations of any issue, collaborate with the appropriate state or federal agencies, and serve as an on-the-ground presence that will build local relationships and knowledge to study and improve farmworker labor conditions. This should be held accountable by a diverse oversight committee of local stakeholders

Increase local resources for proactive investigation by hiring 2-3 local investigators in the Farmworker Ombudsman's office who will assess evidence of alleged labor violations and help carry out enforcement with the appropriate state or federal agencies

Health and safety education for farmworkers by grants administered by the Ombudsman's office to local nonprofits to conduct culturally and linguistically competent outreach and education to workers about health and safety issues such as heat, water, pesticides, injuries and sexual assault.

Protect pregnant women from pesticide exposure through a local ordinance that agricultural employers must allow any worker to take unpaid pregnancy leave with job status and seniority protected for up to the entire duration of their pregnancy.

Ensure real rest breaks through a local ordinance requiring notice to be posted on all field toilets that rest breaks include at least 10 minutes of rest time starting when a worker reaches the break area where water, shade and bathrooms are located and that rest breaks are paid separately from piece rate pay.

Inspect farms for access to clean bathrooms in the field, duplicating a successful program in the Monterey County Environmental Health Department

Enforce existing pesticide laws by hiring an additional inspector in the Agriculture Commissioner's office focused on ensuring farmworkers are protected from pesticide violations that would endanger their health

Aid victims of sexual assault by hiring an additional Crime Victim Advocate in the District Attorney's office focused on connecting farmworkers with resources and helping them navigate the legal system