

**AMERICAN BAPTIST
POLICY STATEMENT ON AGRICULTURAL LABOR**

We follow and serve Jesus Christ as the Lord of all life and who have historically affirmed the value of supporting the physical and spiritual needs of our fellow human beings. We believe in opportunity for each person to reach his/her full potential. We urge American Baptists to be nonviolent change agents, to bring hope and new alternatives to the despairing, and to address institutions and systems that sociologically, psychologically and economically oppress persons. We, therefore, call on American Baptists to:

1. Support agricultural workers attempting in nonviolent ways to change institutions which affect and oppress them thereby bringing about economic justice, self-development and change in the present system of agricultural labor.
2. Uphold agricultural workers right to representation and a voice in the industry to which they contribute: Support passage of laws which prohibit employers from retaliating against farm workers for labor organizing or other activities to protect their interests and which require corporations to negotiate fairly in contract negotiations.
3. Support labor agreements between corporations, growers and farm workers which include fair wages, fair working conditions, a seniority system and grievance procedure so that workers can address concerns on the job without fear of firing or blacklisting;
4. Advocate that corporate codes of conduct include a genuine role for enforcement by the workers affected by such a code;
5. Advocate for national legislation which provides a path to citizenship for agricultural workers in this country so that they can work without constant fear of firing and deportation;
6. Support changes in child labor law to remove exceptions that permit children in agriculture to work longer hours at younger ages and in more hazardous tasks than those in other occupations. Support changes in federal laws and state regulations to ensure that all farm workers receive overtime pay, workers compensation, minimum wage and access to sanitary facilities at work. Support appropriation of adequate funding for enforcement of such laws on the federal, state and local level.
7. Affirm farmers and agricultural corporations who treat employees with dignity and justice and who uphold laws and regulations regarding agricultural labor.
8. Remain aware and attentive to the needs of farm workers and be ready to take a stand on their behalf as individual consumers and as the Church, through our purchasing power, witness, hospitality and organizational decisions;
9. Join the National Farm Worker Ministry, an interfaith organization with over 35 years of history supporting farm workers as they organize for justice and empowerment in order to be informed and ready to give economic and spiritual help when farm workers organize to change in nonviolent ways those institutions which misuse and dehumanize them.

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