

INTERFAITH RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE IOWA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE IOWA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE, AND THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE CONFERENCE

Whereas: We believe that mutual association with others to achieve legitimate ends is a basic need and right of all in a free society. This applies to agricultural workers equally with other economic groups. Forms of organization for democratic and self-determining participation in economic, political, civic and other areas of life and work, by which farm workers seek responsibility to advance their status will be encouraged. Specifically included within the general right of association is the right to organize into labor unions and bargain collectively with employers. Laws and other public policies which have been established to regulate this relationship between employers and employees to establish justice, and to protect all the parties involved should be extended to include agricultural wage workers. The National Labor Relations Act was enacted in 1935 to regulate this relationship, but agricultural labor has been specifically excluded from the law's provisions.

Whereas: We support the efforts of all farm workers to achieve recognition of collective bargaining rights, recognizing that their efforts call attention to a nationwide problem, and that the success of their efforts will have far-reaching implications for the plight of all agricultural and migrant workers, including those in Iowa.

Whereas: We are convinced that application of the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act to agricultural workers will serve the best interests of growers and the public at large. In the absence of orderly worker-grower bargaining procedures, strikes, boycotts, confusion and bitterness often occur. Bringing the services of the National Labor Relations Board to both growers and workers will protect the just interests of both parties and assure a minimum of injury to the common good.

Therefore:

1. We recommend that the church bodies in Iowa go on record in support of amending the National Labor Relations Act, so as to make its provisions applicable to agricultural labor in collective bargaining.
2. We recommend that churches support the efforts of such workers' peaceful and non-violent struggle, and that they prayerfully consider their responsibilities in light of this situation, and extend all possible aid with gifts of food, money, and personal involvement.
3. We recommend that churches and church members communicate their concerns in these matters to their senators and representatives in the United States Congress.

Adopted by General Assembly, Iowa Council of Churches 1/20/67.

ILLINOIS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES,
Springfield, Ill., August 9, 1967.

HON. FRANK THOMPSON,
Chairman, Special House Subcommittee on Labor, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. THOMPSON: Enclosed find two policy statements, one from the Board of Directors of the Illinois Council of Churches, an organization of twelve Protestant denominations in the state of Illinois; the other from the Central Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church, one of the member denominations of the Illinois Council of Churches.

Both of these statements indicate a growing support for the inclusion of farm labor under the National Labor Relations Act. Although these statements do not represent the opinion of every person in the Central Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church or the member groups of the Illinois Council of Churches, they do indicate that a large number of concerned churchmen feel that the time has come to discontinue the exclusion of farm labor under the National Labor Relations Act.

I would like very much to have both of these statements placed in the House record.

I certainly hope that you personally and the House Subcommittee on Labor will do everything you can to move House Bill 4769.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely yours,

FAY H. SMITH, Associate Secretary.