

Join FLOC Members Organizing in the Fields for Justice and Labor Rights

FLOC has just launched a new campaign aimed at ending the corruption running rampant in the US agricultural system by calling for an end to the government support for H2A Labor Contractors and farm supervisors that have been taking advantage of the system and preying on workers by extorting bribes, intimidating workers, and stealing wages for far too long. The call is for the US Department of Labor to stop approving Labor Contractors' petitions to bring H2A workers and for big agricultural purchasers like Reynolds American to refuse to buy crops from growers who use them.

Why now?

In recent years, H2A Labor Contractors have grown exponentially from small players with a few dozen workers to huge operations with thousands of workers working for dozens of farms. In 2020 alone, FLOC members lost over 700 jobs because growers are subcontracting labor out to unscrupulous labor contractors.

What is so bad about H2A Labor Contractors?

These contractors are given the power of the federal government to control access to work visas when the US DOL approves their petitions. The US DOL has decided to generally not find a joint employer relationship between the H2ALC and the grower who hires the H2ALC, meaning that even if growers know that the contractor is violating the law and stealing wages, they have no legal liability. US DOL representatives have also spoken publicly about what the data shows clearly, that H2ALCs are almost always out of compliance with laws and providing some of the most abusive working conditions in the agricultural industry. Labor contractors regularly threaten workers with deportation, punishing economic circumstances, and violence to keep workers from speaking out. Growers are experiencing significant economic challenges and when an H2ALC convinces them that they can provide a workforce at a significantly lower price, the tens of thousands of dollars in savings and lack of liability, this can often be seen as a safe way forward. In the end union jobs are lost, workers are exploited, and standards in an already dangerous and notorious industry are rolled back.

What can be done?

US DOL should stop approving H2ALC applications until it can work with stakeholders to build a functioning plan of enforcement. Similarly, agricultural purchasers should both stop buying crops from growers that use H2ALCs until they can work on a purchasing protocol that ends the abuse in their supply chain, which includes economic support to growers who hire directly and the right for all workers to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

What can supporters do to make this a reality?

1. Sign the petition calling on US DOL to announce a moratorium on H2ALC visa petition approvals and calling on corporate agricultural purchasers to stop buying from growers who use H2ALCs
2. Ask your church, union, or community organization to sign on in support by hosting a virtual or in-person teach in
3. Donate to the campaign to put organizers on the ground to support workers' organizing at H2ALCs
4. Stay tuned for more action items. Taking the action items above will automatically register you for new action items as the campaign develops