



Agricultural Worker Justice Act of 2026

Introduced in the Senate by: Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.); Cory Booker (D-N.J.); John Fetterman (D-Pa.); Ron Wyden (D-Ore.); Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of essential workers in helping American families put food on the table and support a successful economy. However, jobs in the meatpacking and food processing industry can often be difficult and often hazardous. These workers continue to have higher injury rates compared to other industries, including amputations, sprains, lacerations, and musculoskeletal injuries. They also face exploitative conditions and abusive behavior including shouting, harassment, and assaults.

At the same time, rapid consolidation in the agricultural industry has rendered food supply chains ineffective and exacerbated the poor working conditions that agricultural workers endure on the job. Large, consolidated meatpacking businesses have the power to exploit meat and poultry processing workers by providing low wages, unsafe working conditions, and taking retaliatory actions against labor organizers. Requiring safe working conditions for these essential workers who play a vital role in our food system is vital to building a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food supply chain.

Legislation: The *Agricultural Worker Justice Act* strengthens the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) labor policies to ensure the safety and well-being of workers at meat and poultry establishments and requires major food companies to provide decent wages in order to enter contracts with USDA. The legislation also authorizes \$400 million per year for state, tribal, and territory governments to purchase food locally for food banks and schools. Additionally, it requires the Comptroller General to conduct a report on racial and ethnic disparities in the meat and poultry processing sector to combat discriminatory practices.

Supporting Organizations: The *Agricultural Worker Justice Act* is endorsed by the Health, Environment, Agriculture, and Labor (HEAL) Food Alliance and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW).