

February 13, 2009

Dr. Thomas C. Hood
Executive Director
The Society for the Study of Social Problems
901 McClung Tower
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-0490

Dear Dr. Hood:

Thank you for your letter concerning labor rights for migrant workers. The Maine Department of Labor has been concerned about the treatment of migrant workers in this State for some time. While we seldom see gross abuse of these workers, we have tried to be proactive by having a presence in the field and by disseminating information.

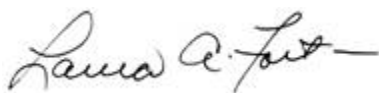
Spanish is the first language of the majority of the migrant workers in Maine. We have developed some required posters and informational brochures in Spanish. Besides distribution in the field by our State Monitor Advocate, there are posters in the CareerCenters and other areas where the migrant worker might access services, such as the Raker Center.

One problem that is consistently brought up by advocates and others working directly with the migrant workers is that a substantial portion is not literate in their first language. To address that, we have been looking at pictograph, posters developed in California and other states.

I would like to note that we do have a close working relationship with the regional staff of the U. S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division. Despite limited staff in Maine, they have had a timely and appropriate response to any complaints. We are considering formalizing that relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding with them.

Thank you again for providing the SSSP resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laura A. Fortman", followed by a horizontal line.

Laura A. Fortman
Commissioner

LAF/WP/ln