



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 22 2021

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 616 without my signature.

The labor force is invaluable to the prosperity of our state and the very fabric of our society. My Administration has worked tirelessly to protect and support workers across California. The recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Cedar Point Nursery v. Hassid* (2021) eliminating 30 years of precedent has significantly impeded the ability of unions to access agricultural worksites. I deeply understand the need to address the impact of this decision. Any modernization of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA) must take these challenges to access into account.

AB 616 creates a new process for agricultural employees to elect a labor representative through a ballot card election. This bill contains various inconsistencies and procedural issues related to the collection and review of ballot cards.

Significant changes to California's well-defined agricultural labor laws must be carefully crafted to ensure that both agricultural workers' intent to be represented and the right to collectively bargain is protected, and the state can faithfully enforce those fundamental rights.



Therefore, I am directing the Labor and Workforce Development Agency to work collaboratively with the Agricultural Labor Relations Board and all relevant stakeholders to develop new policies for legislative consideration to address this issue. I look forward to continuing our vital work to improve working conditions and opportunities for farmworkers across our state.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom