



# UNITED FARM WORKERS of AMERICA, AFL-CIO

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12/10/01

## Press Statement: Re Picketing of L&I Offices

The mission of the Department of Labor and Industries is: **WE LISTEN, WE CARE, WE RESPOND.**

Today, over 100 injured farm workers are picketing all of the Department of Labor and Industry's offices in central Washington to draw attention to the fact that when it comes to serving the needs of the large farm worker community in Central WA, the Department of Labor and Industries

- Does not Listen
- Does not Care
- And does not Respond

### **L&I Does Not Listen to the Spanish Speaking Farm Worker Community**

For years farm worker advocates have been urging L&I to follow the lead of other major agencies and provide notices in Spanish to the over 100,000 farm workers in central Washington. We have also asked L&I to provide outreach to the farm worker community to educate this largely immigrant community about the protections and benefits provided to injured workers under this state's workman's compensation system. For years we have asked L&I to provide sufficient bilingual claims workers to handle the cases of 1000's of injured farm worker. We have asked for ombudsmen to help immigrant farm workers navigate the complex workmen's compensation system

### **L&I has not listened to these common sense requests.**

- **Fact.** L&I does not provide notices in Spanish to injured workers. **Result--** thousands of injured workers cannot communicate effectively with L&I and many are denied their rights under the law.
- **Fact.** L&I Does not currently have one single person doing outreach to the farm worker community. **Result—**Most farm workers do not know what their rights are and consequently do not receive full benefits or protections when they are injured.
- **Fact.** The Bilingual Claims staff, which handles injured workers' cases, has been reduced in central Washington. **Result—**Injured workers are facing longer waits to get their cases heard.
- **Fact.** There are currently no ombudsmen assigned to help farm workers when they have problems, even though there is a program in Western WA that helps nonagricultural workers who have problems with their cases. **Result—**Workers get lost in the complex L&I system and many get their cases closed unjustly.

**L&I does Not Care about farm workers and has Not Responded to their needs.**

**!Con Union Se Vive Mejor!**

*Founded by César E. Chávez (1927-1993)*