



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 28, 2011

To the Members of the California State Senate:

In 1975, it was my privilege to sign into law our nation's first agricultural labor relations act, the "ALRA." This monumental achievement came only after a decade of intense conflict and violence in the fields.

The movement created by the United Farm Workers provided the political basis for the legislative process that made the ALRA possible. In previous years, all attempts at passing a farm labor bill had failed, caught in the cross pressures generated by the profound differences that divided the Teamsters, the growers and the UFW. The final bill was not the product of one side but a hard fought compromise. It came after months of meetings and the participation of literally thousands of people. I personally spent hundreds of hours—often late into the night—listening and arguing with lawyers and representatives of all the sides.

Thirty-six years later, the ALRA is still recognized as the best labor relations act in the country. Under its protections, tens of thousands of agricultural workers have voted for unionization or otherwise expressed their choice as to how their interests should be advanced.

Yet, the disputes never quite stopped and today there are serious complaints that workers are deprived of their rights through a variety of unfair, improper and illegal acts. The proponents of SB 104 argue that the ALRA no longer works and must be drastically changed.

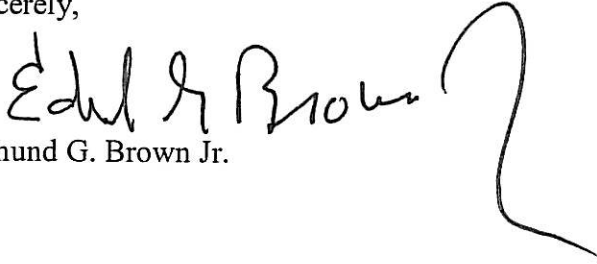
SB 104 is indeed a drastic change and I appreciate the frustrations that have given rise to it. But, I am not yet convinced that the far reaching proposals of this bill--which alter in a significant way the guiding assumptions of the ALRA—are justified. Before restructuring California's carefully crafted agricultural labor law, it is only right that the legislature consider legal provisions that more faithfully track its original framework. The process should include all those who are affected by the ALRA.

I am deeply committed to the success of the ALRA and stand ready to engage in whatever discussions—public and private—that will accomplish the appropriate changes.

As at the beginning, all parties must be heard and, before any product emerges, a wide array of opinions and experiences should be fairly considered. Besides being personally involved, I will direct my Labor and Agricultural Secretaries to reach out to all those who can help us achieve a fair and just result.

I am returning Senate Bill 104 without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edmund G. Brown Jr." in a cursive style. The signature is written over the printed name below it.

Edmund G. Brown Jr.