

National Lawyers Guild

Labor & Employment Committee

September 17, 2009

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SUPPORT for SB 716 Wolk (D-Davis)

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the National Lawyers Guild Labor & Employment Committee, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 716, which will expand rural transit options and establish the eligibility of farm worker vanpools to receive Local Transportation Funds [LTF]. In doing so, SB 716 accomplishes two critical reforms. First, it establishes a threshold population density of 10,000, the population at which rural counties must fully invest their LTF funds in public transit. Secondly, SB 716 specifies that farm worker vanpool services are eligible for LTF financing.

Innovative and flexible public transit services are necessary to address unmet transit needs in rural communities and communities with long commutes. Vanpool services are one of the most affordable and sustainable transportation options currently offered to the diverse and under-served populations in these communities, such as farm workers traveling daily to and from the fields in which they work. In addition to providing safe and economical transportation, vanpools also offer environmental advantages for the community at large, as the air quality benefits of vanpooling have been well documented and continue to grow.

Since 1937, the National Lawyers Guild has provided legal support to movements for social change, principally on a volunteer basis. The Labor & Employment Committee [L&EC] focuses on struggles for economic and social justice. In the 1930s the Guild focused on workers' rights, supporting New Deal legislation to assist working people and the unemployed; in the 1950s the Guild defended labor leaders and others attacked for their progressive political views. Then and now, the Guild L&EC actively supports progressive labor and employment law struggles. The L&EC is comprised of several hundred labor and employment attorneys across the country, including those who assist farm workers and other rural and under-served populations.

We urge you to sign into law SB 716 (Wolk), which will provide for the full and appropriate investment of all Local Transportation Funds and will ensure that the transit needs of all rural Californians are met. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, and thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frances C. Schreiber
(510) 302-1071
fcs@kazanlaw.com