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Farmworker Women will Convene in Washington DC to Demand Protections

A delegation of farmworker women will meet in Washington, D.C. from October 2-4, 2012 to launch a new national initiative dedicated to promoting economic justice, equality, health and safety for all U.S. agricultural workers. The group is comprised of current and former agricultural workers, along with women who hail from farmworker families. These women are all community leaders, activists and advocates who joined forces to form the first national farmworker women's organization in the United States, named *Alianza Nacional de Campesinas* ("*Alianza de Campesinas*", The National Alliance of Farmworker Women, in English).

"This is a very proud moment for us and an important moment in history," said Mily Treviño-Sauceda, President of *Alianza de Campesinas*. "Alianza was created by farmworker women and women from farmworker families for the betterment of our families, our communities and our workplaces."

The group was formed in 2011 by a small group of activists but has grown to include women from Arizona, California, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Texas, and Washington. In addition, women are participating through a bi-national collaboration between the *Alianza de Campesinas* and the Mexico-based migrant rights organization, Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.

"Far too often the federal government and, even, non-profit organizations have acted as though we do not have power or ability to make positive changes for our lives," said Floribella Redondo, Secretary of *Alianza de Campesinas*. "We are capable and committed but we have not been provided with the tools or the resources to make the changes that our community requires."

Representatives of the *Alianza de Campesinas* will meet with policy makers, federal agency officials, students and members of the public to educate them about their most pressing concerns and to make recommendations for the benefit of farmworker community members. Among these, the delegation will address gender violence against female migrant workers, employment abuses, immigration concerns, health priorities and safety issues.

"Our community has been subjected to violence, discrimination, abuse and exploitation for many years," said Suget Lopez, Delegate for *Alianza de Campesinas*. "Farmworker women are especially vulnerable because we have been made invisible. This pilgrimage to our nation's capital is meant to send a message to the politicians, employers and to the public that we are here and we will not sit by quietly without fighting for our rights."

Alianza de Campesinas members represent the following organizations: Campesinos Sin Fronteras, Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc., Colonias Development Center, Farmworker Association of Florida, La Mujer Obrera, Organización en California de Líderes Campesinas, the Rural Coalition and Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation, among others. In addition, several key groups have been instrumental in providing support and planning for *Alianza's* delegation to DC, including Farmworker Justice, Georgetown University, the Rural Coalition, representatives of the US Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies.

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