

Chavez demands ouster of Suitt, Stull from unit

SACRAMENTO (AP) — Cesar Chavez today demanded the removal of two legislators from a committee which watches over operation of the state's farm labor law, charging that they are "agents of employers."

Chavez, head of the AFL-CIO United Farm Workers, also filed unfair labor practice charges against the two legislators, state Sen. John Stull, R-Escondido, and Assemblyman Tom Suitt, D-Indian Wells.

Both legislators represent Imperial County.

The union leader charges that Stull and Suitt, at the invitation of growers, went last week to the Coachella Valley, where the union is trying to organize farm workers and where it has filed unfair labor practice charges against

growers.

Marc Grossman, a spokesman for Chavez, said the legislators interrogated farm workers in the presence of employers and supervisors, using supervisors as translators. Grossman said they based their questions on "wild and unfounded" charges made by growers.

Grossman said Stull questioned workers on the K.K. Larson grape ranch, and Suitt visited a ranch owned by Ranchers Management Service.

"To put it mildly we're outraged," Grossman said.

Suitt said, "There had been some allegations that farm labor board agents had been making various statements" favoring the UFW.

"My concern is that that board function in a fair and impartial way," Suitt said. He

added he used one of his own staff people to interpret as he talked to some workers from the Larson and the Ranchers Management Service ranches.

"In most areas the board is functioning in a reasonable manner. It is important to me that the thing doesn't get out of line because of actions of board employees. I am going to do everything I can to see that doesn't happen," he said.

Suitt added he had no intention of leaving the oversight committee.

Stull said after talking to about 45 workers at the Larson and Bob Kull ranches, he concluded that some board agents had been acting in a pro-union way.

Defending the fact he talked to workers, Stull said, "I have no other way to get the information. What do they want me to do, talk to Chavez?"

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