

American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) • American Immigration Lawyers Association • California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. • CAUSA (Or. immigration coalition) • Equal Justice Center (Tex.) • Farmworker Justice • Friends of Farmworkers, Inc. (Penn.) • Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) • International Brotherhood of Teamsters • The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) • Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) • Leadership Conference on Civil Rights • League of United Latin American Citizens • National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed (NALEO) Educational FUND • National Council of La Raza (NCLR) • National Farm Worker Ministry • National Immigration Forum • National Legal Aid & Defender Association • Pinos y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN, Or.) • Service Employees International Union (SEIU) • UMOs (Wis., Minn., S.D., Kan., Mo., Tex.) • UNITE HERE • United Farm Workers of America • United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)

May 24, 2005

Re: Please oppose Chambliss Amendment 4084 to the AgJOBS provisions in S. 2611

Dear Senators,

The above-listed organizations request that you support provisions of the Senate comprehensive immigration reform bill, S.2611, that are known as “AgJOBS” -- the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security Act. The lead sponsors, Senator Larry Craig and Senator Edward Kennedy, worked with major agribusiness employer organizations and the United Farm Workers to reach a reasonable, sensible, workable compromise that is good for American agriculture and good for the nation.

Please oppose Senator Chambliss’s proposal, in Amendment 4084, to fundamentally change the AgJOBS earned legalization program and undermine the important goal of stabilizing the work agricultural workforce.

His amendment number 4084 is one of about a dozen he has introduced based on his opposition to AgJOBS. Together, these amendments amount to his earlier proposal that the Senate rejected on April 19, 2005 by a resounding vote of 21-77 (as an amendment to the Iraqi War Supplemental Appropriations bill, when AgJOBS obtained 53 votes in its favor).

AgJOBS will provide agricultural employers with a stable labor supply by giving many undocumented farmworkers the chance to earn the right to become legal immigrants. The majority of farmworkers are undocumented. Under the earned legalization program, applicants would need to demonstrate recent work history in U.S. agriculture and satisfy other immigration rules to earn temporary resident status. To gain permanent immigration status, applicants then must work three to five additional years in agriculture in the U.S.

Sen. Chambliss seeks to change the eligibility requirements for the earned legalization program so that several hundred thousand active farmworkers would be denied the

opportunity to participate in the program. He would accomplish this by establishing artificially stringent and utterly unrealistic eligibility requirements. The past-work requirement, for example, would require 150 days of agricultural work in each of two years and a work day would be defined as performing at least 8 hours of work in a day.

Sen. Chambliss knows that many farmworkers are not offered and do not work eight hours on many days, and that many undocumented farmworkers who have worked eight hours in a day have not been given employment records to prove it. Sen. Chambliss also undoubtedly knows many hard-working farmworkers obtain fewer than 150 days of agricultural work in a year because it is seasonal work, and even those who do obtain that much have difficulty proving it. The AgJOBS compromise, made tougher by Sen. Feinstein, requires proof of 150 days of farm work in the two-year period ending December 31, 2005. This is a reasonable compromise that serves the important purpose of bringing legality to the farm labor force.

Sen. Chambliss would change AgJOBS in several other ways in Amendment 4084 that we object to, and numerous other ways in other amendments. **The Senate rejected his approach in 2005 and should reject Sen. Chambliss's amendment again.**

Please support AgJOBS.

Thank you.

For additional information, please contact:

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