

## **Farmworker Justice Applauds House Democrats' Effort to Advance Immigration Reform**

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Farmworker Justice today praised the introduction of a comprehensive immigration reform bill by House Democrats to build momentum to reform the country's broken immigration system. Bruce Goldstein, the President of Farmworker Justice, said the bill builds constructively upon the bipartisan bill that passed the Senate with broad support and the House Homeland Security's bipartisan border security bill.

"Every day many farmworkers live and work in fear, unable to secure their immigration status and experiencing workplace discrimination. The bill introduced today is not perfect, but it does include a path to citizenship for the 11 million and the carefully negotiated agricultural compromise in the Senate-passed bill. This compromise was reached after months of negotiations between the United Farm Workers and a coalition of agribusiness associations.

"If enacted into law, these provisions would help stabilize the farm labor workforce and grant eligible farmworkers the opportunity to earn legal immigration status. It would help farmworker families remain together and build better lives, while affording growers access to skilled and reliable workers. This agricultural stakeholder agreement includes major concessions by all parties; farmworkers should not be asked to give up more.

"The farmworker provisions in the bill introduced today stand in stark contrast to Rep. Goodlatte's Agricultural Guestworker Act (HR 1773), which would create a massive new guestworker program that holds current undocumented farmworkers in a permanent second-class status, and provides no status for their family members. HR 1773 will lead to job loss for today's workers as employers would have access to up to 500,000 vulnerable guestworkers under a new federal program, which includes even fewer protections than the notorious Bracero program of the last century. Unlike the provisions for sensible reform introduced by the House today, HR 1773 would undermine immigration reform and worsen the agricultural immigration crisis.

We are united as a nation by a deep respect for those who work hard for a living to make our nation stronger. Farmworkers labor under demanding conditions. We depend on them for our nation's food security. They should be treated with dignity and respect, and, along with the rest of the 11 million, be afforded an opportunity to earn a path to citizenship for themselves and their families. The House must act promptly and should move forward with sensible immigration reform.