

**For Immediate Release**

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**Farmworker Justice Welcomes First Senate Hearing on  
Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

Farmworker Justice praises the Senate Judiciary Committee for moving forward with a hearing to address the issue of immigration reform. Farmworker Justice urged the Senate to act quickly to pass legislation to reform our broken immigration system and create a roadmap to citizenship for eleven million aspiring Americans, including many of the workers on our farms and ranches.

Bruce Goldstein, President of Farmworker Justice, made the following statement:

“The public debate on immigration policy vitally affects the agricultural workers who cultivate and harvest our food since over one-half of the approximately 2 million seasonal farmworkers lack authorized immigration status. Farmworkers work extremely hard, often in hazardous conditions, for very low wages, and perform an essential role to bring food to our tables. Many farmworkers’ lack of immigration status causes them to fear challenging illegal employment practices and inhibits them from seeking improved workplace conditions. As a result, wage theft and other violations of employment laws are common in agriculture.

Congress should enact legislation that reforms our broken immigration system and creates a roadmap to citizenship for the 11 million aspiring Americans, including farmworkers and their families. An above-board agricultural labor relations system will lead to improved working conditions, less employee turnover and higher productivity, all of which will help ensure a prosperous and more secure agricultural sector for workers, employers and the nation.

“Proposals for anachronistic guestworker programs should be rejected as inconsistent with America’s economic and democratic freedoms. The people who cultivate and harvest our fruits and vegetables should not be deprived of our nation’s economic and democratic freedoms. If workers from abroad are needed in the future to perform seasonal agricultural jobs for which United States workers are not available, they should be treated as immigrants who have the opportunity to earn citizenship.

“Immigration reform should be a stepping stone toward modernizing agricultural labor practices and treating farmworkers with the respect they deserve. A roadmap to citizenship and strong and equal labor protections are vital to these goals.”