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Rep. Goodlatte's Immigration Bill Undermines Bipartisan Compromise and Would Harm Farmworkers

Farmworker Justice Statement on New House Bill Regarding Immigration and Farmworkers

Washington, DC - Following the introduction of the Agricultural Guestworker Act by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), Farmworker Justice President Bruce Goldstein made the following statement:

“Despite widespread recognition of the need for comprehensive reform legislation to fix our broken immigration system, Rep. Goodlatte has offered piecemeal legislation that will only aggravate the unfairness and dysfunction in our current system. This new proposal stands in stark contrast to the agricultural immigration compromise included in the Senate immigration bill, which has broad support and resulted from months of difficult negotiations between major agribusiness groups, the United Farm Workers, and a bipartisan group of Senators.

Goodlatte's bill contains a new agricultural guestworker program that would deprive U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents of job opportunities, lower farmworkers' already poor wages, and allow exploitative conditions for an army of new guestworkers. Most important, the bill deprives the hundreds of thousands of current farmworkers who lack authorized immigration status the opportunity to earn a green card or citizenship.

Rep. Goodlatte's bill deserves no serious consideration. The immigration reform compromise in the Senate includes both a road map to citizenship for the current undocumented agricultural workforce and a new visa program to address future farm labor needs. It would be good for farmworkers and employers while ensuring a secure and safe food supply.”