



Immigration Reform with a Roadmap to Citizenship is Critically Important to Farmworkers and Our Nation's Food Security

- Congress must enact legislation that reforms our broken immigration system and creates an accessible roadmap to citizenship for the 11 million aspiring Americans, including farmworkers and their families.
- The *status quo* is untenable. Over 50% of the roughly 2 million farmworkers are undocumented. This harms farmworkers, farmers and the nation.
- Farmworkers work extremely hard at low wages in a dangerous occupation to perform an essential role cultivating and harvesting the food for our tables. But when the majority of workers lack legal status, most farmworkers are too fearful of deportation or being fired to challenge dangerous conditions or other workplace violations.
- Consumers suffer when our nation's food supply is tainted by poor working conditions that can impact food safety and the integrity of the supply chain.

There is a solution: the agricultural stakeholder agreement - a logical solution that should be respected:

- After months of difficult negotiations, the United Farm Workers, on behalf of farmworkers, and agricultural employers reached a compromise agreement with the leadership of Senators Feinstein (D-Cal.), Bennet (D-Col.), Rubio (R-Fla.), and Hatch (R-Ut.).
- The positive stakeholder agreement is included in the Senate bipartisan immigration bill, S. 744.
- The hard-fought stakeholder agreement represents a win for agricultural employers, for farmworkers and for our national interest in a secure, safe food supply and should be respected. It includes difficult concessions by both parties in the interest of reaching an agreement.

An above board agricultural labor relations system will lead to better working conditions, less employee turnover and higher productivity, all of which will help ensure a prosperous agricultural sector and improved food security.

- The bill includes two parts: an earned legalization program and a new agricultural worker visa program:
 - Legalization program: experienced undocumented farmworkers and their family members who meet eligibility requirements will have an opportunity to obtain legal immigration status and to earn lawful permanent residency through continued work in agriculture.
 - New agricultural worker visa program: a new agricultural guestworker program to streamline employer access to foreign workers while ensuring important protections for agricultural workers.

The Goodlatte “Agricultural Guestworker Act,” H.R. 1773, would worsen, not resolve the agricultural immigration crisis

- Rep. Goodlatte’s “Ag Act” is a one-sided and harsh bill that stands in stark contrast to the balanced stakeholder agreement. HR 1773 is a flawed piecemeal approach that would harm farmworkers.
- HR 1773 fails to offer a solution to stabilize the agricultural labor force. Rep. Goodlatte’s would require undocumented farmworkers to self-deport and would relegate them to second-class temporary worker status, assuming they were sponsored, with almost no protections and with no opportunity to earn citizenship in the country they work to feed.
- HR 1773 would tear families apart by failing to include any measures to allow families to remain together and by deliberately prohibiting family members from joining temporary agricultural workers. Very few workers would be likely to participate in such a harsh program and the farm labor force would not be stabilized.
- Rep. Goodlatte’s bill will lead to job loss for multitudes of US workers as employers will have easy access of up to 500,000 vulnerable guestworkers each year. The bill reaches far beyond traditional agriculture to include year-round, permanent jobs in industries such as poultry and meat processing plants.
- Rep. Goodlatte’s bill slashes worker protections and includes fewer protections than the notoriously abusive Bracero program. By eliminating virtually all of the protections in the current exploitative H-2A program, guestworkers will be even more vulnerable to exploitation and will have extremely limited access to judicial relief and legal assistance. US workers who are not displaced will face huge wage cuts and other reductions in working conditions due to lack of protections for US workers and temporary workers.

There is a way forward: we urge you to reject Rep. Goodlatte’s unworkable and exploitative proposal and support comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship the positive agricultural stakeholder agreement.