

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our opposition to an unwise expansion of the H-2A program and the creation of a new guestworker program. Both would result in the displacement of U.S. agricultural workers and neither would protect farmworkers. Farmworkers do some of the most difficult work in America. Not only do they toil in the fields to put food on our tables, but they also provide vital contributions to the local communities in which they live. We must improve how we treat our nation's farmworkers. We ask you to oppose the push under this Administration to undercut U.S. farmworkers, deport undocumented workers and import exploitable guestworkers.

America should have labor and immigration policies that create a level playing field and give farmworkers what they deserve: the chance to work legally, earn fair wages and change jobs freely. Employers that pay decent wages and invest in their workforce should not be undercut by employers that do not.

Unfortunately, members of Congress working with the Trump Administration are proposing to replace current agricultural workers with new guestworkers who have even fewer labor and political rights. Their plans will create a modern-day Bracero program, and precipitate a race to the bottom to the detriment of workers who are already in one of the most poorly paid careers in America.

We oppose the legislative rider added by Congressman Newhouse to the House Appropriations spending bill for the Department of Homeland Security on July 18, which would open up the uncapped H-2A program to year-round jobs. Such a drastic change to the program should not be considered without reforms that improve the program and legalize the professional farmworkers that are currently the backbone of the industry.

Moreover, we oppose the efforts by Congressman Goodlatte to replace the H-2A program with a new agricultural visa system because it will create even more unfairness and dysfunction in our immigration system. Rep. Goodlatte's proposal will likely be similar to an extremely harmful bill he introduced in 2013, and would have a devastating impact on our nation's agricultural and food processing workers. The terms of the new agricultural guestworker proposal would deprive U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents of job opportunities, including by limiting prioritization protections for U.S. workers and expanding access to vulnerable guestworkers for even more employers, such as those in year-round processing. Moreover, Goodlatte's proposal would lower farmworkers' already poor wages and allow exploitative conditions for hundreds of thousands of new guestworkers in numerous ways.

We hope these unwise proposals will be put aside and Congress will refocus on the one thing that could stabilize agriculture quickly: providing legal status for undocumented agricultural workers who currently are living under the constant threat of arrest and deportation. Congress should support the Agricultural Worker Program Act of 2017, authored by Senator Feinstein and Representative Gutierrez, which would provide undocumented agricultural workers and their family members with a path to immigration status and citizenship.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
MAFO
MALDEF
Mi Familia Vota
Migrant Education Program
Missions Ministry Team of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church
NAACP
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)
National Education Association (NEA)
National Employment Law Project
National Farm Worker Ministry
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina/o Psychological Association
National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA)
Oxfam America
Pesticide Action Network
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA (RAFI)
School Sisters of Notre Dame
SER Jobs for Progress National
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sierra Club
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of Mercy
Southern Poverty Law Center
Stuart Center
Student Action with Farmworkers
The Advocates for Human Rights
The Episcopal Church
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
UFCW International Union
United Farm Workers (UFW)
United Farm Workers Foundation (UFW Foundation)
U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI)
United Auto Workers (UAW)
UnidosUS (formerly NCLR)
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)
Unitarian Universalist Peace Fellowship (UUPF)
UNITE HERE
United We Dream
Voto Latino
The William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI)

Orleans County Health Department (NY)
Pax Christi Florida (FL)
Pinos y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN, OR)
Public Justice Center (MD)
ROCitizen (NY)
Rural and Migrant Ministry (NY)
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership (KY)
Sisters of St. Joseph (NY)
Society of the Sacred Heart, US-Canada Province (MO)
Southeast Community Health Systems (LA)
St. Mark's Episcopal Church (NY)
Syracuse Peace Council (NY)
The Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc (FL)
United Migrant Opportunities Services (UMOS, WI)
Virginia Association for Biological Farming VA)
Wayne Action for Racial Equality (NY)
Western NY Coalition of Farmworker Serving Agencies (NY)
WNYCOSH (NY)
Worker Justice Center of NY, Inc. (NY)
Zufall Health Center (NJ)