

#i immigration

Immigration Reform to Advance America's Agriculture Industry

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iamimmigration.org



#ifarmimmigration

Immigration Reform to Advance America's Agriculture Industry

The #ifarmimmigration campaign unites America's agriculture voices in support of immigration reform. The Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC), the American Farm Bureau Federation (a founding member of the AWC), and more than 70 of the largest American agriculture groups join the Partnership for a New American Economy to launch #ifarmimmigration, an industry-wide campaign to support renewed efforts to enact immigration reform this year. In February, #ifarmimmigration will:



Host a Capitol Hill briefing where members and staff can hear from leaders and farmers.



Release new research on the impact of labor shortages on American farms.



Conduct farm tours in key districts around the country.



Organize community events for members of Congress with local agriculture leaders.



Help farmers tell their stories through videos and op-eds in social & traditional media.



Sponsor paid media in key districts and online.

Severe worker shortages and an inefficient visa program are hurting our farmers and putting American jobs at risk. Without access to a legal, reliable workforce, fields go untilled, crops spoil, and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic potential go to waste. That's why this month, the Agriculture Workforce Coalition and the Partnership for a New American Economy are coming together to show how urgently farmers need reform.



**American Farm Bureau Federation • AmericanHort • Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association
National Council of Agricultural Employers • National Council of Farmer Cooperatives • National Milk Producers Federation
USA Farmers • U.S. Apple Association • United Fresh Produce Association • Western Growers Association
Western United Dairymen • Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform**

*Thank you to all of the organizations & individuals
who helped support #farmimmigration.*



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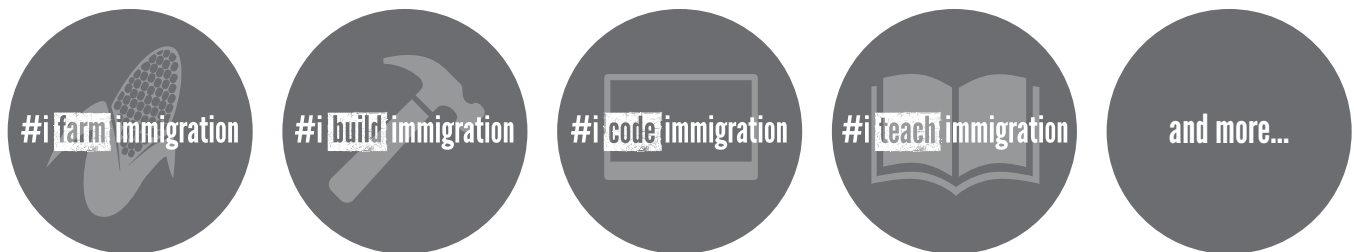
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#IAMIMMIGRATION UNITES VOICES SUPPORTING IMMIGRATION REFORM

The campaign engages industries across the economy to help fix the nation's broken immigration system.

Immigration affects everyone from scientists to entrepreneurs, from farmers to students. Over the next several months, the campaign will engage each of these groups and more to push for reform.



#iamimmigration

LEARN MORE GET THE FACTS NEWS & UPDATES TAKE ACTION

ADD YOUR REASON FOR SUPPORTING IMMIGRATION REFORM

#i [] IMMIGRATION

TWEET SHARE

From farmers to teachers, investors to inventors, Americans across the country support immigration reform for many different reasons.

The #iamimmigration campaign gives people a platform to share their specific reason for supporting reform. Sign up to join the campaign below. Then, share your story and urge leaders in Washington to advance immigration reform.

ADD YOUR VOICE

I own and operate a dairy farm in Emmett, Idaho where I milk a thousand cows and raise about 200 acres of

"OHIO AGRICULTURE NEEDS IMMIGRATION REFORM."

CHRIS GIBBS

AMERICA'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY CANNOT GROW when America's immigration system is broken.

To learn more about the campaign, visit iamimmigration.org or e-mail info@renewoureconomy.org.

THE CRITICAL NEED FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

IMMIGRATION REFORM WILL HELP THE US ECONOMY AND CREATE JOBS

- **Immigration will grow the US economy.** The US stands to gain an estimated \$1.5 trillion over 10 years from comprehensive immigration reform, in addition to a \$66 billion boost in federal tax collection.

AGRICULTURE IS CRITICAL TO OUR ECONOMY AND NEEDS IMMIGRATION TO GROW

- **Immigrant farm workers help contribute billions to our economy every year.** Agriculture contributes more than \$100 billion each year to our economy thanks in large part to immigrant farm workers, who make up 80 percent of hired workers on American farms.
- **Downstream employment is linked to immigration reform.** Each of the 1.6 million hired farm employees working on American farms and ranches supports 2-3 full-time jobs further down the value chain in food processing, transportation, farm equipment, marketing and retail and other sectors.
- **Without immigrant farm workers, economic output would decline** and thousands of US citizens would lose their jobs.

THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF US WORKERS WILLING AND ABLE TO PERFORM FARM WORK

- **Across the board, farmers are struggling to find enough workers.** A 2012 survey by the California Farm Bureau found that 71 percent of tree fruit growers, and nearly 80 percent of raisin and berry growers, were unable to find an adequate number of employees to prune trees or vines, or pick the crop.
- **The worker shortage is costing farmers millions of dollars each year.** Agricultural employers reported more than \$300 million in losses in 2010 because of worker shortages.
- **Current immigration laws are putting American jobs at risk.** Two million people are hired each year to work on American farms, and each of these workers supports two to three other employees downstream in jobs like sales, marketing, and transportation. Without immigration reform, many of these valuable jobs will leave the country and never return.

WORKER SHORTAGES IMPACT AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS AND FOOD SECURITY

- **Eliminating immigrant labor would increase food prices for American consumers.** A 2012 Texas A&M University study found that farms using immigrant labor supply more than three-fifths of the milk in the country. Without immigrant labor, the number of dairy farms would drop by 4,532, reducing milk production by 29.5 billion pounds and raising retail milk prices by an estimated 61 percent.
- **Farmers are scaling back operations and outsourcing production to other countries.** In 2008, Texas A&M University reported that 77 percent of vegetable farmers reported scaling back operations. More than 80,000 acres of fresh produce that used to be grown in California have been moved to other countries. Estimates are that thousands of farms could fail and farm income could drop by \$5 to \$9 billion.

THE CURRENT H-2A VISA PROGRAM IS BROKEN

- **The H-2A program is costly, bureaucratic, and highly complicated to use.** Its extensive rules make it especially difficult for small farmers—many employers have to hire lawyers to help them fill out the applications and to protect themselves from costly penalties for minor technical errors.
- **Administrative delays in the H-2A program cost farmers millions in lost revenue.** According to a national survey by the National Council of Agricultural Employers (NCAE), H-2A workers arrived on the job an average of 22 days late thanks to bureaucratic hold-ups. That translated to nearly \$320 million in lost revenue in 2010.
- **The H-2A program doesn't actually help farmers find workers.** The program provides less than 4 percent of the hired workers needed in agriculture. Only 25 percent of workers referred from state workforce agencies to H-2A employers actually began work, and only 5 percent stayed through their entire contract period.
- **Many growers are opting out of the H-2A visa program.** The same NCAE survey found that 47 percent of employers were “not at all satisfied” or only “slightly satisfied” with the H-2A program, and 42 percent said they would not participate the following year because it is “too administratively burdensome or costly.”

IMMIGRATION REFORM WILL MEAN BETTER SECURITY

- **Immigration reform would increase border security.** Proposed immigration and agricultural labor reform legislation would increase surveillance of high-risk areas along our southern border.
- **Proposed legislation would focus resources on keeping criminals out of the US.** One of the best ways to improve border security is to create a legal, workable way for farm workers to enter our country. If we don't have to waste resources locking up lettuce harvesters, we can focus on keeping those with criminal intentions out of our country.
- **Immigration reform is not a “get out of jail free” card.** To earn eventual legal status, farm workers would have to fulfill rigorous criteria including working for several years in agriculture and paying taxes.

IMMIGRATION AND AGRICULTURE

WHAT DOES AGRICULTURE NEED?

This crisis must be addressed through legislative reform that includes both a program to provide access to a legal workforce into the future and an adjustment for current experienced unauthorized agricultural workers. Agriculture supports border security and enforcement measures so long as it is coupled with a solution providing agriculture with a legal and stable workforce.

CURRENT WORKFORCE

In order to minimize the impact on current economic activity, the AWC supports an adjustment of status for experienced, but unauthorized, agricultural workers who currently reside in the U.S. This adjustment should include the following components:

- These workers have a future obligation to work in agriculture for several years.
- Upon completion of this future work obligation, the workers could obtain legal status and the right to work in whatever industries they choose, including agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROGRAM

The Agricultural Worker Visa Program will ensure agriculture's future legal workforce. This new program must offer both employer and employee choice and flexibility through two different work options: an "At-Will" visa and a Contract visa.

- "At-Will" visa employees have the freedom to move from employer to employer without any contractual commitment, replicating the way market forces allocate the labor force now.
- Contract visa employees commit to work for an employer for a fixed period of time, giving both parties increased stability where it is mutually preferred.

HOST ORGANIZATIONS

PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW AMERICAN ECONOMY

The Partnership for a New American Economy brings together more than 500 Republican, Democratic and Independent mayors and business leaders who support immigration reforms that will help create jobs for Americans today. The Partnership's members include mayors of more than 35 million people nationwide and business leaders of companies that generate more than \$1.5 trillion and employ more than 4 million people across all sectors of the economy, from agriculture to aerospace, hospitality to high tech and media to Manufacturing. Partnership members understand that immigration is essential to maintaining the productive, diverse and flexible workforce that America needs to ensure prosperity over the coming generations.

Website: RenewOurEconomy.org

Twitter: [@RenewOurEconomy](https://twitter.com/RenewOurEconomy)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/renewoureconomy](https://www.facebook.com/renewoureconomy)

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AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE COALITION

The Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC) brings together organizations representing the diverse needs of agricultural employers across the country. AWC serves as the unified voice of agriculture in the effort to ensure that America's farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce.

The founding members of the AWC are: American Farm Bureau Federation, AmericanHort, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, National Council of Agricultural Employers, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Milk Producers Federation, USA Farmers, U.S. Apple Association, United Fresh Produce Association, Western Growers Association, and Western United Dairywomen.

Website: agworkforcecoalition.org

Facebook: [Facebook.com/AgricultureWorkforceCoalition](https://www.facebook.com/AgricultureWorkforceCoalition)

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ENGAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

#ifarmimmigration

Use the official hashtag #ifarmimmigration in all of your posts to connect your content to the broader conversation, making it easier for the immigration reform community and the general public to see and amplify the campaign.

Spread the Word on Twitter

Tweet about your experiences in Washington, your personal reasons for supporting immigration reform, key facts related to the issue, and special quotes and other moments from the week, and be sure to use the hashtag #ifarmimmigration. Consider including the handles of your Representatives in Congress in your tweets.

Visit iamimmigration.org for draft tweets.

Share Graphics and Photos on Facebook, Instagram, Google+ and Other Platforms

Take photos from your time in Washington and share them on your personal and organization's social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, Google+ and other platforms. Be sure to include the hashtag #ifarmimmigration on all of your content to tie it to the broader conversation. Visit iamimmigration.org to share immigration infographics like the ones below.



Visit iamimmigration.org for tweets, graphics and other social media content and email digital@renewoureconomy.org if you have any questions.

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