

TALKING POINTS

- **America's farmers face a variety of challenges, but the unprecedented shortage of domestic labor and restricted access to a guest workforce top the list.** This issue has grown more dire over the last year, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - This labor crisis negatively impacts our nation's economic competitiveness, local economies, and job market. Every farm job sustains at least two to three more jobs off the farm.
 - Our current agricultural labor system is driving production agriculture outside our borders to countries with lower production costs and an adequate labor force.
 - Without a reliable, legal and experienced workforce, American farmers risk being unable to tend, harvest and pack farm products. By reforming the guest worker system, we can keep American farms open and productive, and protect our domestic food supply.
- **Key reforms are needed to the H-2A program,** the visa program farmers use to hire legal workers to supplement their U.S. workforce. The existing program is cumbersome, expensive, restrictive, and often leaves U.S. farmers at a competitive disadvantage in the global marketplace. We must address the needs of American farmers by:
 - **Enabling greater access for the entire agriculture industry.**
 - Definitional changes: Access to the program is determined by outdated statutory definitions that do not align with modern agricultural practices. The modernization of the H-2A Definition of Agriculture Labor & Services is critical to meet the needs of farmers now and in the future.
 - Seasonality changes: Entire sectors of agriculture struggle to fill open jobs on the farm by not currently having access to the H-2A program due to its seasonal requirement. Producers with both seasonal needs and year-round labor needs must be eligible to participate in the H-2A guest worker program without arbitrary limits.
 - **Stabilizing wages.**
 - Farmers need a predictable, economically feasible wage rate that enables them to budget and ensure their businesses remain competitive internationally. The existing wage methodology is based on a flawed survey-based approach.
- **Farm workers, who have played an essential role throughout the pandemic, continue to face uncertainty in this country.** A solution to ag labor reform must include a path to earned legal status to ensure the stability of American agriculture. Bottom line: U.S. agriculture needs a solution for farm workers to stay and work in agriculture legally. This is not amnesty.
- **Without immediate relief, the future of American agriculture and our nation's food security is in jeopardy, as many American farms will struggle to stay open and our reliance on other nations for food will increase.** We urge the Senate to pass its own bipartisan legislation, that addresses outstanding inadequacies in the ag labor reform legislation passed by the House in March. Farmers and ranchers seek further improvements to the legislation in the Senate and support is needed now to address the crisis facing U.S. agriculture.