

November 19, 2019

Dear Member of Congress:

We write to urge you to support the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2019, HR 5038. The bill is a bipartisan compromise representing the culmination of hard fought negotiations to address the needs of farmworkers and our agriculture system in the context of our broken immigration system. Importantly, this bill recognizes the valuable role of farmworkers in our food system by providing an earned path to legal immigration status and citizenship to farmworkers and their families.

If enacted, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act would provide an opportunity for experienced agricultural workers to apply for legal status if they show employment in U.S. agriculture and meet other criteria. At least half of the nation's roughly 2.4 million farmworkers are undocumented immigrants and immigration relief is urgently needed to address the constant fear of deportation many farmworkers and their children experience. The ability to obtain immigration status and a path to citizenship is key to enabling farmworkers to bargain for better working and living conditions and to challenge serious labor abuses. This legislation would result in a more stable farm labor force and greater food safety and security to the benefit of employers, workers, and consumers.

The bill also would revise the existing H-2A visa program to address concerns of both farmworkers and agricultural employers. The compromise includes concessions made by all sides in this debate and includes both important new protections for farmworkers, such as new protections against trafficking, as well as provisions sought by employers. Importantly, for the first time, the bill would recognize the humanity of those working here under temporary visas by providing a path to permanent status for those who satisfy the specified work requirements.

The Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2019 is an important step forward and sends a clear signal that there are leaders in Congress ready to engage constructively on immigration and reach across the aisle to develop sensible policies. We encourage you to support this legislation and join this important effort to protect farmworkers and our nation's agricultural system.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.
AirGo
America's Voice
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Bread for the World
California Human Development

California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc.
CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates
Carolina Family Health Center
CASA
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
CASA of Oregon
Central Valley Opportunity Center
Centro De Los Derechos Del Migrante, Inc. (CDM)
Chicago's Legal Aid Society
Child Labor Coalition
Chillinois Young Farmers Coalition
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights - CHIRLA
Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations
Coalition on Human Needs
Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST)
Community Council of Idaho, Inc.
Community Farm Alliance
CREDO
CRLA Foundation
Equal Justice Center
Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project (FLAP)
Farmworker Justice
Finger Lakes Community Health
Florida Legal Services, Inc.
Food Empowerment Project
Food Policy Action
Freedom Network USA
Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
Hand in Hand Mano en Mano
Hispanic Affairs Project
Hispanic Federation
Hispanics in Philanthropy
Human Agenda
Immigration Hub
Inter University Program on Latino Research
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
Jobs With Justice Education Fund
Justice at Work
Justice for Migrant Women
Justice in Motion
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
La Cooperativa Campesina de California
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

Logan Square Farmers Market
MAFO, Inc.
Maine Immigrants Rights Coalition
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
Maryland Wineries Association
Mexican American Council
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Consumers League
National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA)
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Latinx Psychological Association
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association
National Partnership for New Americans
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Northwest Forest Worker Center
Northwest Regional Primary Care Association
Northwest Workers' Justice Project
Operation Access
Oregon Human Development Corporation
Oxfam America
PathStone Corporation
Pesticide Action Network
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United)
Proteus Inc.
Public Justice Center
Roots and Culture Kombucha
Rural and Migrant Ministry
SER Jobs for Progress National Inc.
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Southeast Community Health Systems
Telamon Corporation
UFW Foundation
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
UnidosUS
United Farm Workers (UFW)
United Migrant Opportunity Services/UMOS Inc.
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
Voto Latino
Wayne Action for Racial Equality