

October 15, 2013

Dear Representative,

We write you to express our strong opposition to Chairman Goodlatte's Agricultural Guestworker Act, H.R. 1773. Chairman Goodlatte's "Ag Act" is a one-sided and harsh bill that would devastate our nation's agricultural system and undermine core American values.

The Agricultural Guestworker Act is the worst guestworker program authored in decades and includes fewer protections than the notoriously abusive Bracero program. It would allow employers to bring as many as 500,000 new agricultural workers every year, not only for seasonal jobs, but also for year-round agricultural work and for the food processing industry. The guestworker program offers almost no protections for U.S. workers against competition from foreign workers and would result in job loss for hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. The bill strips away decades of worker protections and leaves vulnerable guestworkers with virtually no protection from abusive conditions. A key failure of the bill is its omission of a solution for the majority undocumented agricultural workforce. Instead, undocumented farmworkers would be required to self-deport with only the possibility of return as a temporary guestworker, with no opportunity to remain with their families or to become a member of the society they help to feed.

Chairman Goodlatte's agricultural guestworker bill stands in stark contrast to the carefully-negotiated, balanced agricultural stakeholder agreement reached by the United Farm Workers and the Agriculture Workforce Coalition with the support of a bipartisan group of Senators. 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.

We strongly oppose Chairman Goodlatte's HR 1773 as an unworkable, anti-immigrant and anti-worker approach to our nation's immigration problems. Relegating hard-working farmworkers to a permanent 2nd class status apart from their families is contrary to our nation's core values of freedom, equality and family unity. Immigration reform must be worthy of our nation and should include a roadmap to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country, including farmworkers and their families. The agricultural stakeholder agreement includes difficult concessions, but is a realistic and workable compromise that values the contributions of farmworkers and ensures an adequate labor force for future labor needs. Farmworkers already made major concessions to reach an agreement that would address employers' demands for less regulation, quicker processes and lower labor costs and should not be asked to make more.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Missions, Inc. (AMI)
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
Alliance of Baptists
Alliance for a Just Society
America's Voice

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Bread for the World
Bridge Project
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@Network for Healthy Families
Center for Community Change
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Church World Service
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach, Missionary Society of St. Columban
Economic Policy Institute
Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)
Farm Labor Organization Committee, AFL-CIO (FLOC)
Farmworker Justice
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food & Water Watch
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Franciscan Action Network
Global Workers Justice Alliance
Grassroots International
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
Hispanic Federation
Housing Assistance Council
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of
America (UAW)
Jobs with Justice and American Rights at Work
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Laborer's International Union of North America (LiUNA!)
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of United Latin American Citizens
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
MAFO
Mennonite Central Committee, U.S. Washington Office
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd North America
National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Employment Law Project
National Family Farm Coalition
National Farm Worker Ministry
National Guestworker Alliance
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Latino Evangelical Coalition
National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Own the Dream
Oxfam America
Pesticide Action Network North America
PICO National Network
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)
Public Citizen
Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rural Coalition
SER - Jobs for Progress National, Inc.
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network
Southern Poverty Law Center
The Episcopal Church
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Farm Workers
United Farm Workers Foundation
United Food and Commercial Workers International Labor Union
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
USAction
U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA)

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice

Rural Development Leadership Network (RDLN) (AL)
Telamon Corporation, Alabama
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Border Action Network (AZ)
Eslabon Associates, Inc. (AZ)
Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation
Alliance San Diego (CA)
California Faculty Association
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Center for Farmworker Families (CA)
Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)
Church Women United SC-SN State Unit (CA)
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) (CA)
Community Food and Justice Coalition (CA)
Food Empowerment Project (CA)
Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church (CA)
Human Agenda (CA)
Immaculate Heart Community (CA)
Kawaiisu Tribe of Tejon (CA)
La Cooperativa Campesina (CA)
Law Office of Barbara Macri-Ortiz (CA)
Lideres Campesinas (CA)
Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers (CA)
Religious Sisters of Charity (CA)
Silicon Valley Alliance for Immigration Reform (CA)
Loretto Community (CO)
GoingGreenie (CT)
Employment Justice Center (DC)
Alianza de Mujeres Activas (FL)
Central Florida Jobs with Justice
Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations, Inc.
Coalition of Immokalee Workers (FL)
Farmworker Association of Florida
Gainesville Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice (FL)
Pax Christi Florida
Student Labor Action Project (FL)
We Count! (FL)
Youth and Young Adult Network of the National Farm Worker Ministry (FL)
Idaho Hispanic Caucus

Congregation of St. Joseph (IL)
Dominican Sisters and Associates of Peace (IL)
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Farmworker & Landscaper Advocacy Project (IL)
Project IRENE (IL)
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters (IN)
St. Joseph Valley Project - Jobs with Justice (IN)
Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis (SSJ-TOSF) (IN)
South-Central Indiana Jobs with Justice
Congregation of the Humility of Mary, Leadership Team (IA)
Crossing Borders (IA)
La Luz Hispana (IA)
Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa
Sisters of Charity, BVM (IA)
Social Justice Office, Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (KS)
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (KY)
Grow Dat Youth Farm (LA)
Religious of the Sacred (LA)
EcoResolve (MD)
Maryland Pesticide Network
Public Justice Center (MD)
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Adorers of the Blood of Christ (MI)
ASC Peace and Justice Office (MI)
Adrian Dominican Sisters Office of Global Mission Justice and Peace (MI)
Congregation of St. Joseph Justice Team (MI)
Michigan Land Trustees
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (MI)
Sister's Home Visitors of Mary (MI)
Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada Province (MI)
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
Mississippi Center for Justice
The Call of the Land (NE)
Sisters of Mercy Midwest Community (NE)
Collaborative Visions (NM)
HELP New Mexico, Inc.
Los Jardines Institute (NM)
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
CATA - The Farmworker Support Committee (NJ, MD, PA)
Agrarian Trust (NY)

Agricultural Justice Project (NY)
Blauvelt Dominican Sisters Social Justice Committee (NY)
Coalition for Economic Justice (NY)
Dominican Sisters (NY)
DREAM Action Coalition (NY)
Eastern Alliance of Farmworker Advocates (NY)
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Greater Rochester Coalition for Immigration Justice (NY)
The Greenhorns (NY)
The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (NY)
Justice & Peace Ministry, Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga (NY)
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)
Rural & Migrant Ministry (NY)
Rural Development Leadership Network (NY)
Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ (NY)
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester (NY)
Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood (NY)
Smugtown Mushrooms (NY)
Wayne Action for Racial Equality (NY)
Worker Justice Center of New York
El Cambio (NC)
Farmworker Advocacy Network (NC)
North Carolina Justice Center (NC)
Student Action with Farmworkers (NC)
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (OH)
Ashtbula, Geauga, Lake Counties Farmers Union (OH)
Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network (OH)
Cleveland Jobs with Justice (OH)
Immigrant Worker Project (OH)
Sisters of St. Francis, Tiffin, Ohio
CASA of Oregon
Causa, Oregon's Immigrant Rights Organization
Northwest Forest Worker Center (OR, CA, WA)
Northwest Workers' Justice Project (OR)
Friends of Farmworkers, Inc. (PA)
Sisters of St. Joseph-Baden (PA)
Cumberland Presbyterian Church (TN)
Fair Trade Appalachia (TN)
Asociación Pro Servicios Sociales, Inc. (TX)
Dominican Sisters of Houston (TX)

Equal Justice Center (TX)
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) (TX)
Migrant Justice (VT)
Vermont-Puerto Rico Café con Leche Project
Vermont Workers Center
Legal Aid Justice Center, Immigrant Advocacy Program (VA)
Telamon Corporation (VA)
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Community to Community (WA)
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (WA)
Northwest Justice Project (WA)
Family Farm Defenders (WI)
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (WI)
United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) (WI, KS, MO, MN, TX)