



May 12, 2009

Sen. Diane Feinstein
Hart Senate Office Building 331
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Feinstein:

ImmigrationWorks USA strongly supports your efforts to address the agricultural piece of the immigration puzzle by reintroducing the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits and Security Act of 2009.

ImmigrationWorks is a national federation of employers working to advance better immigration law. The organization links 25 state-based, pro-immigration business coalitions: employers and trade associations from Florida to Oregon and from every sector of the economy that relies on immigrant workers. Its twin goals: to educate the public about the benefits of immigration and build a mainstream grassroots constituency in favor of reform – business owners and others from across America willing to speak out and demand an overhaul.

Agriculture illustrates two often missed points. Even in a recession, with rising unemployment, many employers still can't find the workers they need to keep their businesses open – and we as a nation still desperately need to address our broken immigration system.

Fewer and fewer Americans are interested in farm jobs. The vast majority of farm workers are foreign-born. And by helping to keep American agriculture afloat, this foreign labor force sustains literally millions of farm-dependent jobs in other sectors of the U.S. economy. The problem is that the existing channel for seasonal farm workers to enter the country legally is far from adequate – it supplies workers to fill only two to four percent of available job opportunities. And as a result, the vast majority of foreign farm workers in the U.S. are believed to be unauthorized.

The beauty of AgJOBS is that it addresses this problem both retroactively and by looking forward. It alleviates the risk and instability that growers and farm workers face now – and promises an adequate future flow of needed farm labor by reforming the dysfunctional H-2A program.

ImmigrationWorks hopes that the 111th Congress will take on the tough but urgent challenge of reforming our immigration system. AgJOBS is a key piece of the fix that's needed and should be included in whatever legislation Congress enacts.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tamar Jacoby".

Tamar Jacoby
President