

Talking Points for WG Members on Immigration Reform

General Points

*Our farmers face a critical shortage of legally authorized and experienced workers, which negatively impacts our economic competitiveness, local economies, and jobs. Every farm worker engaged in high-value labor-intensive crop and livestock production sustains two to three off-farm but farm-dependent jobs. We cannot continue allowing foreign producers to take advantage of our labor crisis.

*The landmark agreement reached by the Ag Workforce Coalition (AWC) and the United Farm Workers (UFW) union earlier this year helps meet the labor needs of agriculture both now and in the future.

*We urge your support for immigration reform legislation to address the crisis facing the agriculture industry.

*Inaction on immigration reform legislation for process or political reasons is not a suitable outcome for agriculture.

If you are speaking with a House Democrat:

*While it would be preferable for the House to act on immigration in a comprehensive manner it is unclear whether that will be possible in the House since House Republican leadership has only talked about piecemeal bills.

*We urge you to support passage of any single piece of legislation, even if it is not comprehensive, that will move the legislative process into a conference, so that differences between the House and Senate can be negotiated.

*While we prefer something to pass on agriculture, that is not as important as ensuring the process moves forward to conference.

If you are speaking with a House Republican:

*We understand that the House has the responsibility to work its own will on immigration legislation.

*We urge you to support passage of any single piece of legislation that will move the legislative process into a conference, so that differences between the House and Senate can be negotiated.

*While we prefer something to pass on agriculture, that is not as important as ensuring the process moves forward to conference.

*Whatever the House passes for agriculture should incorporate the principles agriculture has been supporting and must work for producers in all regions.

*The House MUST act, Republicans control the chamber and as such you MUST press Republican leadership to bring forward immigration, whether its comprehensive or in pieces, to allow this process to move forward—immigration cannot die on the floor of the House due to inaction.