

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 18, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Kerry:

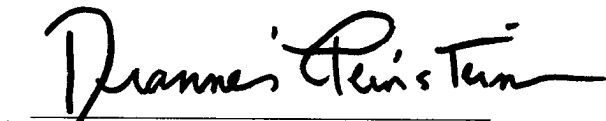
We write to urge you to move quickly to solve what has become an annual problem with the Department of State's visa system that have caused serious delays in the processing of thousands of nonimmigrant visa applications, including for H-2A visas for agricultural workers in California, Arizona, Washington state, and elsewhere.

Agricultural workers are desperately needed in our states, but cannot begin time-sensitive work because of the delay in processing their visas. Our constituents informed us that the visa delays are causing the agricultural industry to suffer significant economic losses. Perishable commodities such as berries, peaches, vegetables, cherries, and apples are at risk of rotting if not timely harvested. In California alone, it is estimated that there is an economic loss of \$500,000 to \$1 million per day of delay. We further understand that employers are concerned about the safety and well-being of their H-2A workers, who may be targeted by smugglers and cartel members while awaiting prolonged visa issuance.


Without compromising our security interests, we request that you address this visa processing matter as soon as possible, working with the Department of Homeland Security as necessary, and that once the matter is resolved, H-2A visa processing be prioritized over non-emergency visa applications. We also request that preventive measures be taken to ensure the safety, integrity, and reliability of our nation's security checks and visa systems in the future.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us, or you may have your staff contact our staff, Emilie Hyams at 202-224-9480, or Mark Delich at 202-224-7127.

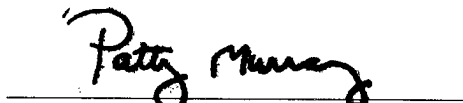
Sincerely,




Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



John McCain
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Jeff Flake
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

DF/erh