



Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs

Statement in Support of Needed Immigration Reform

March 15, 2021

The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP) applauds the Biden administration and congressional leaders for advancing needed immigration reform. Immigrants, and farmworkers particularly, make great contributions to the United States. It is time these individuals have a chance to adjust their status. AFOP strongly supports these efforts and urges their quick adoption.

Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021

The Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021 (H. R. 1603) is bipartisan immigration legislation that would provide undocumented farmworkers and their family members with a path to legal immigration status and citizenship, revise the H-2A agricultural guestworker program to address some employer and worker concerns, and impose mandatory employment verification in agriculture. The United States House of Representatives may consider this bill this week. The product of careful negotiations, the measure has bipartisan support, passed the House last Congress, and could earn approval in the new United States Senate.

American Dream and Promise Act

The American Dream and Promise Act would create a pathway to legal status for "Dreamers," the term used to describe undocumented individuals who were brought to the United States as children. The legislation would grant conditional permanent resident status for 10 years and cancel removal proceedings if people meet certain requirements, including being physically present in the United States on or before January 1, 2021, being 18 years old or younger on the initial date of entry into the country, and not having been convicted of serious crimes.

U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021

President Joe Biden has put forward a comprehensive immigration plan called the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 that includes an eight-year pathway to citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants; a shorter process to legal status for agriculture workers and recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; and an enforcement plan that includes deploying technology to patrol the border. The

initiative also calls for \$4 billion over four years to confront corruption, enhance security and foster prosperity in migrant communities. Additionally, it lays out a plan to create refugee processing in Central America to discourage migrants from trying to travel to the U.S.-Mexican border.

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"This is the year to get this done," said Daniel Sheehan, AFOP executive director, of immigration reform. "Farmworkers plant, tend, and harvest the crops that feed the nation. They go to work no matter the heat, cold, or danger of contracting COVID-19. Who or what could be more 'essential' to the health and wellbeing of our country? They are crucial to economic recovery, too, ensuring the agricultural sector continues to bounce back. Let us as a nation acknowledge their work – and their perseverance and valor in doing it in the face of terrible threat – and give them a chance to share in the American Dream without fear of removal. It is what a grateful nation should and will do. I am certain of it. This is the year."

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