

## **8 DECEMBER 2006**

### **Support Worker Program**

"We need agricultural worker reform before the end of the 109th Congress," was the message sent to the Hill this week by a coalition of more than 375 national, regional and local organizations in an attempt to strong-arm the passage of this legislation before the session ends.

Worker shortages have been reported from coast to coast, from border to border.

The facts are clear: on many American farms, immigrant labor plants, tends and picks the fruits, vegetables and other crops. Immigrant workers tend the livestock-feeding the chickens, turkeys, horses, sheep, hogs and cattle and milking the cows. Immigrant workers also produce, install and maintain the plants that make our homes, towns and cities livable.

The current agricultural temporary-worker program known as H2A needs reform. American agriculture needs a reformed H2A program that is timely, effective and streamlined. It must provide a transition approach that allows for retaining the experienced workforce while capacity is built on the farm and at the border to support wider use of the program.

Congress did not finalize legislation on this topic in the final days of the 109th Congress.  
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