



## **ACIR APPLAUDS LANDMARK AG LABOR AGREEMENT, WELCOMES SENATE COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION BILL**

**April 17, 2013**

The Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform (ACIR) applauds the successful attainment of a new landmark bipartisan employer and worker agreement on reform legislation intended to ensure a legal, stable agricultural workforce. The agreement was finalized yesterday by the Agricultural Workforce Coalition (AWC) and the United Farm Workers. ACIR, part of the AWC, provided much of the legal and economic guidance and expertise in the months-long negotiation that led to yesterday's agreement.

The legislative agreement would encourage experienced farm workers, who comprise most of America's current farm workforce, to earn legal residency by fulfilling a future work requirement in agriculture and meeting other conditions. It would also create a new agricultural visa program – distinct from the current and largely dysfunctional H-2A program – to admit future foreign workers to work specifically in the agricultural sector for up to three years at a time. These provisions will now be considered by the U.S. Senate as a key component of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. ACIR welcomes introduction of the Senate bill, and the coming debate.

In recent years, failed efforts to resolve America's immigration dilemmas through "self-deportation," "attrition through enforcement," and hostile state laws, have harmed farms, farm workers, and families. It is time for Congress to act to modernize America's immigration system. In fact, the very survival of many labor-dependent agricultural sectors depends upon Congress acting. These sectors not only provide America's food and other agricultural products; they also create jobs and sustain entire communities. Labor force solutions will allow America's fruit, vegetable, nursery, dairy, and livestock farms and ranches to survive and thrive in a competitive global economy.

ACIR expresses sincere gratitude for the steadfast leadership and perseverance of Senators Dianne Feinstein, Marco Rubio, Michael Bennet, and Orrin Hatch, who oversaw and assisted

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with the agricultural employer/worker advocate negotiations. ACIR also thanks Senators Charles Schumer and John McCain, and the entire “gang of eight” Senators who have worked tirelessly to craft the border security, enforcement, legal immigration, and legalization provisions of the broader bill. We look forward to working with the entire Senate, as well as the House of Representatives, toward enactment of comprehensive immigration reform that includes the landmark agricultural agreement.

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For more information, contact the ACIR national co-chairs:

Craig Regelbrugge, American Nursery & Landscape Association  
202/425-4401, [cregelbrugge@anla.org](mailto:cregelbrugge@anla.org)

John Young, New England Apple Council  
603/497-2132, [neac1@aol.com](mailto:neac1@aol.com)

Luawanna Hallstrom, National Council of Agricultural Employers  
858/449-9178, [collaborativecommunicationslh@gmail.com](mailto:collaborativecommunicationslh@gmail.com)

**The Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform (ACIR) is the broad national coalition representing over 300 national, regional, and state organizations whose members produce fruit and vegetables, dairy, nursery and greenhouse crops, poultry, livestock, and Christmas trees.**