



March 3, 2015

Dear Representative:

We write to urge you to oppose the four immigration-related bills being marked up in the House Judiciary Committee on March 3 and 4 of this week. These four bills should be opposed because they are punitive and one-sided, and would deepen the problems of our already broken immigration system rather than solve them.

Farmworker Justice is a nonprofit litigation, advocacy and education organization that seeks to empower migrant and seasonal farmworkers to improve wages, working conditions, immigration policy, health, occupational safety and access to justice. Farmworker Justice has decades of experience on immigration. Based on our experience, we view these bills as fundamentally harmful to our immigration system and society. Each of the 4 bills being debated represents a deeply flawed approach to our broken immigration system:

Rep. Trey Gowdy's (R-SC) draconian interior enforcement "SAFE Act" from last Congress, has been resurrected as the "Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act" (H.R. 1148). This bill would take us backward to a deportation-only approach with a raft of enforcement-only provisions that are fundamentally inconsistent with principles of due process and fairness. H.R. 1148 not only adopts a highly punitive approach to enforcement but also would block DHS from implementing nearly all of the November 20, 2014 executive actions. In so doing, H.R. 1148 prevents DHS from prioritizing enforcement resources to target serious threats to national security and public safety, effectively jeopardizing the safety of our communities rather than strengthening it.

Rep. Lamar Smith's (R-TX) "Legal Workforce Act," HR 1147, would require all employers to use the E-Verify system for checking immigration status. Without offering a path to citizenship for the current experienced agricultural workforce, a mandatory E-Verify bill would harm the farmworkers who work hard to put food on our tables, the employers who depend on them, and the nation's food security.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz's (R-UT) "Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act of 2015" (H.R. 1153) and Rep. John Carter's (R-TX) ironically named, "Protection of Children Act of 2015" (H.R. 1149), would gravely harm children, asylum seekers and other vulnerable individuals in direct contravention to our nation's history as a country of refuge for those defending their freedoms or fleeing persecution.

In sum, imposing mandatory E-verify and assigning local law enforcement to apply immigration law would increase fear and drive undocumented farmworkers as well as other aspiring Americans deeper into the underground economy and the margins of society. These bills would further destabilize the farm labor force and our food system. Inhumane enforcement-only approaches to immigration don't

work. Instead of pursuing this failed enforcement-only approach, Congress should pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes an opportunity for undocumented farmworkers, their family members and the rest of the 11 million to obtain permanent immigration status and an opportunity for citizenship. Immigrant farmworkers and other aspiring Americans deserve to be treated with respect and should be given the opportunity to earn immigration status and citizenship.

Sincerely,

Adrienne DeVartanian
Director of Immigration and Labor Rights