

October 3, 2017

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte,

On behalf of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and many of its state affiliates, we thank you for introducing The Agricultural Guestworker Act. We appreciate your leadership in tackling what is an important issue for the livestock industry. Without a workable guestworker program our cattle producers do not have the adequate workforce they need to continue to produce the highest quality beef. We support the Committee's efforts to establish a legal and stable supply of agricultural workers that will help our industry to continue to grow.

The cattle industry is just one of many industry groups that has seen worker shortages for many years. The livestock industry has a need for a visa program that includes year-round workers that are well trained and understand the cattle industry. The existing agricultural labor visa program provides only seasonal labor, thereby excluding industries with year-around labor needs. With the creation of the H-2C visa program within the Agricultural Guestworker Act, we believe this will provide a year-round workable solution to our current labor shortages at both the cattle producer and meat processor levels of the industry.

We also greatly appreciate flexibility of the touchback provisions of the H-2C program. To maintain operational continuity at ranches, feedyards, or dairies, it is important that employers have the flexibility to space out the time required of an H-2C worker to remain outside the U.S. This will allow livestock operations to better manage their workforce in a setting where animals must be fed on a daily basis and the business cannot simply shut down or reduce output for 45 days. In addition, while we appreciate limiting the minimum time for an H2C worker to remain outside the U.S., 45 days is a substantial amount of time for a livestock operation to be without an employee. As this process moves forward, we support efforts to further reduce the minimum touchback period.

Thank you for your leadership and support on this issue, and we look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Respectfully,

American National CattleWomen
Arizona Cattle Feeders' Association
California Cattlemen's Association
Colorado Livestock Association

Florida Cattlemen's Association
Georgia Cattlemen's Association
Kansas Livestock Association
Michigan Cattlemen's Association
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association
Missouri Cattlemen's Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
Nebraska Cattlemen
North Carolina Cattlemen's Association
Ohio Cattlemen's Association
Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association
Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association
South Carolina Cattlemen's Association
Texas Cattle Feeders Association
Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
Virginia Cattlemen's Association
Washington Cattlemen's Association
Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association
Wyoming Stock Growers Association