



National Farm Worker Ministry's **HARVEST OF JUSTICE**

Giving thanks and
working for justice
alongside immigrant
& migrant farm workers

WEEK 3

2018

LEARN

The H-2A “guestworker” program offers visas for temporary, seasonal farm workers. Modeled after the Bracero Program created to meet farm labor shortages after WWII, the H-2A program has few worker protections and is rampant with abuse. H2-A workers’ visas are tied to one grower, which discourages workers from reporting violations or abuses at farms. Increased deportations and fear of such is escalating the labor shortage of local migrant farm workers further incentivizing farmers’ use of the temporary guestworker program. Demand by farmers for workers in this program has been growing steadily to its current level. During the first three quarters of 2017, the Department of Labor issued visas to fill over 160,000 labor positions, a nearly 20 percent increase from the 133,419 positions approved at the same time in 2016.

REFLECT

Without a path to status or citizenship, local migrant farm workers are dissuaded from raising issues of wage theft or working conditions with their employers for fear of losing their jobs to temporary workers. After working at the same farm in Northern Florida, Rafael* was one of 100 workers at the fernery who were dismissed and replaced by H2-A workers. The local farm workers and their families had been long time residents of that community. Without work, they don’t know how they will support their families. Meanwhile, the temporary guest workers are isolated from the broader local community and away from their own families for at least half of the year. In it’s current form (as well as new proposals in Congress to alter the program), the H2-A guestworker program treats farm workers as machines, not taking their human needs of safety, security, family and community into account.

ACT

Contact your Congressperson to ask them to support farm workers and oppose harmful guestworker legislation. Ask them to or thank them for co-sponsoring the Agricultural Workers Act which provides farm workers a path to citizenship. **Link to AWA. Let us know you did it!**



National Farm Worker Ministry educates and mobilizes people of faith and conscience to support farm worker led campaigns to improve farm workers’ working and living conditions.

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