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# Agricultural Workers Program (AWP) “Blue Card” Bill

## Take Action

Join us by visiting your Senators and Representatives in their home districts or in Washington, D.C. If you cannot visit your legislators, please call, write or email them. Personal contact with your legislator is the most effective way to get them to act and we ask you to make that effort. If that is not possible, utilize the [Email Action](#) set up by the United Farm Workers.

To find your representative, go to [https://ziplook.house.gov/htbin/findrep\\_house](https://ziplook.house.gov/htbin/findrep_house)

## Agenda and Message for an In-Person Meeting

**Introductions:** Briefly introduce yourself and others in the group. Thank the Congressperson or staffer for meeting.

**Opening:** Before the meeting, check the Representative’s record on their website to see if they have issued any press releases or endorsed any legislation related to immigration/farm workers and compliment them on doing so.

**State the Ask:** To co-sponsor the Agricultural Worker Program Act of 2019 (“Blue Card” Bill), S. 175/H.R. 641

**Share your Message:** (Why do we want what we’re asking for? Why should they care? Use this space to articulate your faith. You may want to say that your faith dictates loving others and farm workers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Everyone should have safe, decent working and living conditions.)

- The Agricultural Worker Program Act recognizes the valuable role and contributions of farm workers. The bill is important for farm workers because it would take away the constant fear of deportation and allow families to stay together. This bill would also ensure a stable workforce for employers and a secure and safe food system for consumers.
- The Agricultural Worker Program Act would help address the current immigration crisis in agriculture by providing experienced farm workers with a path to temporary

immigration status, followed by an opportunity to earn lawful permanent residency through continued work in agriculture.

Leave: Your contact information, fact sheets and thank the Congressperson or staffer for their time.

## Share it!

Let us hear from you too. Tag us @nfwministry, email us, tell us what happened. If you visit in person, be sure to have your photo made with your legislator and post it on social media or send it to us and we will share it. Along with the photo, post, "Asking/Thanking my representative (add the name of the legislator) to co-sponsor the Agricultural Worker Act of 2019."

## Background

The "Agricultural Workers Program (AWP) has been introduced in both the Senate (S175) and the House (HR 641). It is a proposed solution to adjust the status of undocumented farm workers and their immediate families. Republicans and Democrats supported a similar proposal in 2013, because it is a fair solution to the problem of shortages in farm labor, and the reality that more than half of farm workers are undocumented, but it was not passed.

If passed, this legislation would alleviate the constant fear of detention and deportation that farm workers currently face by offering farm workers and their families an opportunity to gain legal immigration status. With legal status and a path to citizenship farm workers would be better able to improve their wages and working conditions. This bill would also ensure a stable workforce for employers and a secure and safe food system for consumers. It keeps the oversight of labor rights in the Department of Labor.

Blue Card status allows for temporary residency and legal employment. It also allows one to travel outside the U.S. and have the ability to return. To qualify for the Blue Card status a worker must:

- Work for 100 days (in total) in the last 2 years to qualify for a pathway to citizenship
- Pay for an application and a \$100 fine
- Pass a background check and meet other requirements

The work permit provides protection for the workers and their immediate family members from deportation.

Finally, workers can seek Green Card status (residency) by doing one of the following:

- Option A: Continue working in the fields for 100 days each year for 5 years
- Option B: Continue working in the fields for 150 days each year for 3 years
- Can now qualify to become a legal permanent resident
- Pay for application and \$400 fine

After paying the application and \$400 fine workers are on the pathway to citizenship.

National Farm Work Ministry, farm worker organizations and allies are advocating for the passage of the Agricultural Workers Program Act as a step toward addressing our very broken immigration system.