



Farm Workforce Modernization Act

On **March 3**, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) and Dan Newhouse (R-WA) reintroduced the **Farm Workforce Modernization Act**, [H.R. 1603](#), which would create a workforce solution for America's agriculture industry, reform the current H-2A federal agricultural guest worker program, and provide legal status. This bill is strongly bipartisan, thanks to eight months of negotiations in 2019 with farmers, agricultural stakeholders, labor organizations and other advocates.

H.R. 1603 would establish a program for agricultural workers, including their spouses and minor children in the U.S., to earn legal status through continued agricultural employment and contribution to the U.S. agricultural economy.

This bill would create a process to seek Certified Agricultural Worker (CAW) status for those who have worked at least 180 days in agriculture over the last two years. Long-term workers who want to stay can earn a path to a green card by paying a \$1,000 fine and doing additional agricultural work in the U.S. The bill also reforms the H-2A federal agricultural guest worker program and guarantees protections for workers.

On **March 17**, CHIRLA ran an ad in the [Los Angeles Times](#) listing the more than 8,000 community members and 110 California-based organizations that say YES to Immigrants Forward and provided [voting recommendations](#) to California members of Congress leading up to the votes.

On **March 18**, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 247 to 174 to pass H.R. 1603, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. Thirty Republicans voted yes, including Reps. Valadao, Nunes, and LaMalfa of California. For the full vote breakdown: [clerk.house.gov/Votes/202193](#).

The Senate version of the bill has yet to be introduced. Sens. Bennet (D-CO) and Crapo (R-ID) will introduce companion legislation. The bill will need 60 votes to pass successfully. See President Biden's [statement](#) supporting immigration reform for agricultural workers.