

July 8, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of our nation's farmers and ranchers, and the indispensable employees who work alongside them, I write to offer my organization's strong support for the current provisions within the FY2025 Labor-HHS-Education package related to the Adverse Effect Wage Rate and recent U.S. Department of Labor rulemakings. AFBF urges its adoption to provide the necessary short-term relief and stability for farmers and farmworkers alike.

America's farmers are at a crisis point when it comes to our labor market challenges. Each passing year that this issue remains unaddressed, more family farms will shut down and more of our agricultural production will move outside our borders. Sadly, this is a trend we are already seeing as USDA's 2022 Census of Agriculture reported a loss of 141,000 farms since 2017. While there is no substitute for the legislative action needed to reform our current immigration system and worker programs, the provisions within the current package will place a critical check on the avalanche of misguided rulemakings in recent years. In the past two years alone, the U.S. Department of Labor has drafted or finalized over 3,000 pages of new regulations affecting our farm families, with more yet to come. The burdens of these new regulations fall squarely on the shoulders of these families, many of whom do not have staff or resources to absorb the subsequent compliance costs.

Specifically, Sections 118 and 119 in this bill will halt recent ill-conceived rulemakings and hasty agency actions that disrupt daily business on the farm, and instead provide stability and certainty in the near term. There is an established bipartisan consensus that supports these requests. The most recent letter to your attention dated May 21 garnered 120 bipartisan members of Congress in support of short-term relief for H-2A employers and their employees. This grew from a similar effort garnering 75 bipartisan signatures in January, and support for this relief continues to swell. For the sake of our American agriculture's economic sustainability, these reforms deserve the committee's attention and support.

Without congressional action in the FY2025 appropriations cycle, family farms will be faced with tough decisions – these family farms and the employees and communities they support could be protected with your leadership. I am certain that, with your help, we can deliver this needed relief to our agricultural sector and rural economies. Please advance these reforms in a final package.

Sincerely,



Zippy Duvall  
President

CC:

The Honorable Harold Rogers	The Honorable Steny Hoyer
The Honorable Kay Granger	The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
The Honorable Robert Aderholt	The Honorable Sanford Bishop
The Honorable Michael Simpson	The Honorable Barbara Lee
The Honorable John Carter	The Honorable Betty McCollum
The Honorable Ken Calvert	The Honorable Dutch Ruppersberger
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart	The Honorable Debbie Wasserman-Schultz
The Honorable Steve Womack	The Honorable Henry Cuellar
The Honorable Charles Fleischmann	The Honorable Chellie Pingree
The Honorable David Joyce	The Honorable Mike Quigley
The Honorable Andy Harris	The Honorable Derek Kilmer
The Honorable Mark Amodei	The Honorable Matt Cartwright
The Honorable David Valadao	The Honorable Grace Meng
The Honorable Dan Newhouse	The Honorable Mark Pocan
The Honorable John Moolenaar	The Honorable Pete Aguilar
The Honorable John Rutherford	The Honorable Lois Frankel
The Honorable Ben Cline	The Honorable Bonnie Watson Coleman
The Honorable Guy Reschenthaler	The Honorable Norma Torres
The Honorable Mike Garcia	The Honorable Ed Case
The Honorable Ashley Hinson	The Honorable Adriano Espaillat
The Honorable Tony Gonzales	The Honorable Josh Harder
The Honorable Julia Letlow	The Honorable Jennifer Wexton
The Honorable Michael Cloud	The Honorable David Trone
The Honorable Michael Guest	The Honorable Lauren Underwood
The Honorable Ryan Zinke	The Honorable Susie Lee
The Honorable Andrew Clyde	The Honorable Joseph Morelle
The Honorable Jake LaTurner	
The Honorable Jerry Carl	
The Honorable Stephanie Bice	
The Honorable Scott Franklin	
The Honorable Jake Ellzey	
The Honorable Juan Ciscomani	
The Honorable Chuck Edwards	