



## Committee on Migration

**c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB**

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May 14, 2009

Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
331 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

We write to encourage you to reintroduce S. 340, the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Services Act (AgJOBS), that you sponsored in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. This legislation, if enacted, would bring a measure of justice to a large number of foreign-born agricultural workers in our country.

As you may know, over 50 percent of agricultural laborers in the United States work without legal status. These persons often receive low wages, work in poor conditions, and lack health care and other benefits. Because of their undocumented status, they cannot assert basic labor rights and face the real threat of deportation or the prospect of not being re-hired by their employer in the subsequent year. Yet they continue to play an invaluable role of picking the fruits and vegetables that many Americans consume each day.

AgJOBS would help to secure justice for hard-working undocumented agricultural laborers by enabling them to earn permanent resident status over a period of time, contingent upon their work history, good character, and payment of certain fines, fees, and taxes. It would also ensure that they are paid a fair market wage, receive adequate housing, and have the ability to bring federal lawsuits to enforce their labor rights.

We look forward to and welcome the introduction of this landmark legislation in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Thank you for your dedication to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend John C. Wester  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration