



AGRICULTURE COALITION FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

ACIR DISILLUSIONED OVER SENATE FAILURE TO ACT

June 28, 2007

The Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform (ACIR) today expressed its deepest disappointment at the United States Senate's failure to pass 53-46 a crucial procedural motion to complete debate and hold a final vote on S.1639, comprehensive immigration reform. The bill contained an urgently-needed overhaul of the broken 50-year-old H-2A agricultural worker program and a tough earned legalization program for experienced farmworkers. It was strongly favored by American agriculture and seen by most in and beyond agriculture as the best way to accomplish the intertwined goals of border security, a credible employment eligibility verification program, and access to a legal and stable workforce.

“The border will continue to tighten, the crops to ripen, more will rot, economic and human hardship will rise, our food security and economy will suffer,” said Luawanna Hallstrom, co-chair of ACIR and vine-ripe tomato producer based in southern California. She added, “The choice of the status quo over a better future is nothing short of an indictment of the politicians who voted no, and especially those who mobilized to kill this bill. They have let an historic moment pass, and the American people expect and deserve better.”

“Despite the setback, ACIR is undaunted in the quest for lasting and bipartisan reforms” said Craig Regelbrugge, ACIR co-chair and vice president for government relations with the American Nursery & Landscape Association. “Lives, livelihoods, and economies are at stake.”

ACIR leadership expresses its sincerest appreciation to the Senators who led the monumental effort for reform, including Feinstein and Craig, Kyl and Kennedy, McCain, Martinez and Lott, Specter, Graham and Salazar, and all Senators who provided support on critical votes throughout the effort. Also, ACIR recognizes the tireless leadership of President Bush and key Administration officials, including Secretaries Gutierrez, Chertoff, and Johanns.

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