



CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS

Joaquin Castro | Chairman

116TH CONGRESS

April 15, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Senator McConnell, Representative McCarthy, and Senator Schumer,

The Coronavirus health crisis has presented our nation with challenges unlike any we have seen in our lifetime. During this crisis, our frontline farmworkers are laboring every day to put food on America's dinner table and maintain the world food supply. As this virus threatens the resiliency of our food supply chains, it has never been more important to ensure the well-being of our agricultural producers and workforce. Future legislation in response to the coronavirus pandemic must include protections for these vital members of our communities.

Our nation's food security depends on the ability of farmworkers to continue to work safely to produce our nation's food. As members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus we have key recommendations for policies to support farmworkers and contain the spread of COVID-19 in agricultural communities:

- Until the bipartisan Farm Workforce Modernization Act (H.R.5038) can become law, provide our essential agricultural workforce with legal protections from deportation.
- Direct financial assistance to agricultural employers to: provide farmworkers with job security, pandemic premium pay (in line with pay for other frontline workers in our country's critical infrastructure), sick pay, and family leave; and disseminate and implement CDC recommendations on sanitation and social distancing in work sites, employer provided housing and transportation.
- Ensure that farmworker families can feed themselves by requiring that recipients of federal nutrition funding to have dedicated efforts that specifically target farmworker communities.
- Support the childcare needs of farmworkers by expanding the eligibility for childcare programs, along with additional funding and flexibility for the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program.
- Additional support for community health centers, in particular those in rural, agricultural communities.

Farmworkers need our support. They should not live in fear. As this crisis evolves and Congress continues to explore response packages, we stand ready to work with you to ensure these protections are made available.

Hardworking farmworkers deserve and require our action. Their wellbeing and the stabilization of our food supply depend on these actions.

Sincerely,

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
CHC Chair

Ruben Gallego
CHC First Vice Chair

Nanette Diaz Barragán
CHC Second Vice Chair

Adriano Espaillat
CHC Whip

Veronica Escobar
CHC Freshman Representative

Darren Soto
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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

Michael F.Q. San Nicolas
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velazquez
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Jesus “Chuy” Garcia
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Lou Correa
Member of Congress

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress