

July 18, 2018

Dear Congressman Bishop -

The following eight statewide agriculture organizations collectively represent nearly every ag sector of the industry that is dependent on access to a federal guest worker program to provide some or most of their workforce. Over the years, each of us has communicated with you and/or your staff stressing the importance of a viable guest worker program. **Working together, we seek your assistance to deliver a reasonable, cost-effective, and viable visa workforce program to support the many diverse farm operations and the rural communities served by their economic vitality.**

Year after year, the domestic workforce refuses to accept labor-intensive jobs in numerous agriculture and forestry sectors, despite increased wages and employee benefit packages. This has long been a challenge for agriculture, but with the historic low unemployment rate, these challenges have grown exponentially. We need your help.

We ask for your support of Chairman Bob Goodlatte's "AG and Legal Workforce Act." Further, we ask that you co-sponsor this legislation. Georgia's \$74 billion agricultural industry and the strength of our rural communities are counting on you. Having Georgia's delegation co-sponsor this legislation demonstrates how important this industry is to our state and agriculture interests.

The "Ag and Legal Workforce Act" would create a new federal H-2C guest worker program managed by USDA and includes many improvements from the broken guest worker visa programs. This new program will better serve the workforce needs of our industry in the future. It contains numerous key elements lacking in the current H-2A guest worker program used by farmers, including allowing dairy farms to use the program, and could also take some pressure off the labor cap in the H-2B program used in forestry and landscaping.

Many reforms in the "AG and Legal Workforce Act" will assist with the current agriculture labor shortages and spur economic growth critical to rural communities. This is the best chance in over 20 years to deliver meaningful progress to achieve a viable guest worker program that will keep agriculture sustainable in Georgia and across the U.S. now and in the future.

Again, we ask for your support and co-sponsorship of the "AG and Legal Workforce Act." We stand ready to assist in this effort.

Sincerely,
Georgia Agribusiness Council
Georgia Cattlemen Association
Georgia Farm Bureau Federation
Georgia Forestry Association
Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
Georgia Milk Producers
Georgia Poultry Federation
Georgia Urban Agriculture Council