

# American Immigration Lawyers Association

**Press Release**

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## **INTRODUCTION OF AGJOBS ACT: AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP TOWARD REFORMING OUR BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM**

Washington, DC – The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) commends Senators Larry Craig (R-ID) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Representatives Chris Cannon (R-UT) and Howard Berman (D-CA) for the introduction later today in the 109th Congress of the Agricultural Jobs, Opportunity, Benefits, and Security (AgJobs) Act. This bipartisan immigration legislation is an important first step toward fixing our broken immigration system and creating a system that is safe, legal, and orderly. Congress needs to step up to the plate and pass this much needed measure.

The AgJobs Act reflects a historic agreement between the representatives of farm workers and the agricultural industry as well as the pressing need, given humanitarian, economic, and security factors, to reform our immigration laws in this sector of our economy. This measure would streamline the existing H-2A foreign agricultural worker program while preserving and enhancing key labor protections and create an earned adjustment program under which undocumented agricultural workers would be eligible to apply first for temporary resident status based upon their past work experience. Upon satisfying prospective work requirements, these workers could then become permanent residents.

“Once enacted, these provisions will enhance our security by helping us to know who lives and works within our borders and by encouraging people to come out of the shadows and be reviewed by our government. In addition, the legislation benefits both workers and employers by creating a stable labor force and a useable program through which future workers can legally enter the U.S.,” stated Jeanne Butterfield, Executive Director of AILA.

AILA commends Senators Craig and Kennedy and Representatives Cannon and Berman for reintroducing this much needed legislation. It is time for Congress to consider and pass this long-overdue measure. We urge President Bush to give it his full support. The status quo is unacceptable. AgJobs is a needed first step on the road to reforming our broken immigration system.

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*Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that provides its Members with continuing legal education, information, and professional services. AILA advocates before Congress and the Administration and provides liaison with the DHS and other government agencies. AILA is an Affiliated Organization of the American Bar Association.*

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