

News Release

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Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis and ambassadors of Guatemala and Nicaragua sign declarations protecting migrant workers' rights

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, Guatemalan Ambassador Francisco Villagrán De León and Nicaraguan Ambassador Francisco Campbell today signed declarations that will make it easier to protect the rights of Guatemalan and Nicaraguan citizens who work in the United States.

"Individuals from Guatemala and Nicaragua make important contributions to the U.S. economy, and their workplace rights should be protected," said Secretary Solis. "I am pleased that the U.S., Guatemalan and Nicaraguan governments are working together to help make that happen"

The declarations will enable the regional enforcement offices of the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Wage and Hour Division to cooperate with local Guatemalan and Nicaraguan embassies and consulates to distribute information to migrant workers about U.S. health, safety and wage laws. Training also will be provided to both migrant workers and their employers.

In conjunction with the declarations, letters of agreement were signed by the two agencies. The Wage and Hour Division will be able to protect migrant workers in low-wage industries such as hospitality and agriculture. OSHA will continue efforts to improve workplace safety and health conditions while simultaneously providing outreach and assistance to Spanish-speaking workers and employers.

Additionally, through these agencies, the Labor Department will be better able to identify problems experienced by migrant workers and to target labor law enforcement efforts. OSHA, for example, will provide a toll-free telephone number staffed by multilingual operators who are ready, day and night, to receive calls from migrant workers about safety and health issues.

More information about the agreements and department programs that protect migrant workers is available at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/>.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

The Wage and Hour Division enforces federal minimum wage, overtime pay, record keeping and child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as well as the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act and other federal labor laws. More information is available at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/>.

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