

IMMIGRATION REFORM

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 4, 2013

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I represent California's Central Coast—The Salad Bowl of the World. I know firsthand how important immigrant workers are and their vital contribution to our national economy.

If America does not have enough workers, America doesn't eat. And whether or not we like it, most of those farm workers are not America citizens. We must rely on immigrant labor to harvest our food and, when the system breaks down like during the government shut down, it threatens the livelihood of our nation's farmers as well as the availability of fresh produce in grocery stores nationwide.

The agricultural labor crisis threatens jobs on and off the farm. For every job created on a farm, many more non-farm support jobs are created in the supply chain of distribution. Yet California's farmers, who are responsible for billions of dollars of economic activity every year, continue to face significant barriers to finding a legal and stable workforce.

Furthermore, the current, broken immigration system is undermining American food security. Many Americans would be surprised to know how close we all came to not having fresh fruits and vegetables at Thanksgiving because the shutdown prevented farmers from getting legal access to the workers they need to harvest their crops.

For these reasons, as well as many others, I believe it is past time for the House of Representatives to act on broad and meaningful immigration reform.

As Members of Congress, it is our responsibility to enact immigration policies that are tough, fair and practical.

Real immigration reform establishes a system that turns those who are willing to work

hard and play by the rules into taxpayers, paying their fair share. We need a system that has commonsense rules for who and how many people we let in legally, so we don't flood the labor market in hard times, but that allows businesses to hire the workers they need.

It is time to move forward, not backward. Congress must work together to find middle ground that benefits both the temporary guest workers as well as the agricultural employers. Final legislation must create incentives for farm workers to continue to work in the industry so that the United States can continue to feed the world. I believe in a comprehensive approach to immigration reform that includes earned legal status. This approach is critical for our country, our families, and our economy.

I am concerned that some interim immigration reform proposals would create even more devastating labor shortages for growers and other industries that rely on immigrant labor. It is short-sighted to think mandatory worker verification methods, like E-Verify, are the sole solution to our country's illegal immigration issues. Further, we should not impose additional barriers to legal workers who are willing to work hard and play by the rules. It would risk the economic vitality of the entire American agricultural industry and fail to accomplish true immigration reform.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House toward the goal of enacting a comprehensive approach to our nation's immigration problems, including a strong and balanced solution for the agricultural sector.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint commit-

tees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2013 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

DECEMBER 11

2:15 p.m.

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine protecting seniors from medication labeling mistakes.

SD-562

DECEMBER 12

10 a.m.

Committee on Finance

Business meeting to consider an original bill to repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate system and to consider health care extenders.

SD-215

DECEMBER 18

2:15 p.m.

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine the future of long-term care policy, focusing on continuing the conversation.

SD-562