

Facts You Should Know Before You Vote on AgJOBS (S. 359)

AgJOBS is unpopular with voters and costly to taxpayers; it will encourage illegal immigration, invite fraud, and overwhelm adjudicators; and it will not accomplish its primary mission of providing a stable, legal agricultural workforce. The needs of agricultural employers can be met through responsible reforms of the existing H-2A program. Granting yet another amnesty for illegal aliens is not the answer.

1) American voters want enforcement, not amnesty and more job competition.

- 56 percent of Americans oppose “new laws making it easier for illegal immigrants to become legal workers.” (NBC/Wall Street Journal, March 2004)
- 74 percent of Americans say the United States “should not make it easier for illegal immigrants to become citizens of the U.S.” (CNN/GALLUP/USA Today, Jan. 2004)
- 87 percent of Americans support sanctions against employers who hire illegal aliens, 85 percent believe that Congress should pass a law requiring state and local governments and law enforcement agencies to apprehend and turn over to the INS illegal immigrants with whom they come in contact, and 83 percent support mandatory detention of illegal aliens. (RoperASW, March 2003)

2) AgJOBS is an amnesty for up to three million illegal aliens, but it will not lead to a legal, stable agricultural workforce.

- AgJOBS permits illegal aliens working in agriculture to apply first for “temporary resident status” and then for permanent residence. Not only does this two-step process pardon illegal aliens for violating the law (the definition of amnesty), it rewards them with a work permit and puts them on the path to citizenship.
- Experts estimate that about 860,000 of the 1.2 million illegal aliens working in agriculture will qualify for amnesty under AgJOBS. Because the spouses and children of these aliens also are eligible for amnesty under AgJOBS, the total number could reach three million.
- Many of the illegal aliens amnestied under AgJOBS will leave agricultural work as soon as they get their green cards, just as many of those granted amnesty in 1986 did. This is precisely why AgJOBS establishes a two-step process that requires illegal aliens to perform a certain amount of agricultural work before they can qualify for permanent residence. But even indenturing these workers only delays the inevitable—they will leave agricultural work to make room for the next group of illegal workers, and the cycle will begin again. Continued flows of legal and illegal foreign

workers, along with periodic amnesties like AgJOBS, remove the incentives to improve wages and working conditions that the market otherwise would bring to bear on growers, thus ensuring the long-term impoverishment of U.S. agricultural workers.

3) AgJOBS will encourage more illegal immigration and cost U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars.

- Following a four-year decline in apprehensions along the Southern border, illegal immigration has surged following proposals by the President and various Members of Congress to offer legal status to illegal aliens. Apprehensions in the Tucson Sector alone have increased most dramatically. Many of those apprehended have told the Border Patrol that they risked illegal entry in order to qualify for amnesty.
- Almost three million illegal aliens received amnesty under the 1986 law, about the same number estimated to qualify under AgJOBS. A 1997 report by the Center for Immigration Studies estimates that, over a ten-year period, the population amnestied in 1986 received over \$102 billion in federal, state and local assistance programs and services and paid a total of \$78 billion in taxes, for a net direct cost of \$24 billion. The indirect costs added almost \$55 billion more. Will U.S. taxpayers be forced to pick up a similar tab as a result of AgJOBS?
- Congress has passed six amnesties since the “one-time-only” amnesty of 1986 (see: <http://www.numbersusa.com/interests/amnesty.html>) and the number of illegal aliens residing in the United States now is estimated at three to four times its 1986 level. Amnesties—even talk of possible amnesties—entice aliens to enter and/or remain illegally, often risking their lives and the lives of their families, in the hopes that they, too, will someday get amnesty.

4) AgJOBS will encourage fraud and may undermine homeland security.

- As many as two-thirds of the illegal aliens who applied for amnesty as “Special Agricultural Workers” in 1986 filed fraudulent applications. Many had never worked a day in agriculture. At least one of these, Mahmud Abouhalima, a New York City cab driver who was granted amnesty as an agricultural worker under the 1986 law, was a terrorist. Abouhalima currently is serving a 240-year sentence for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.
- The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services already has a backlog of over six million pending applications for immigration benefits. Adding three million applications for legal status under AgJOBS to that backlog will only increase the risk that fraud, false documents, and misrepresentations will go undetected. If DHS grants amnesty on the basis of false or stolen documents, our own government will be responsible for issuing the official documents that establish the false identity as legitimate.

Vote “NO” on AgJOBS.