

April 10, 2013



Dear Senators Leahy and Sanders,

We are writing to call on you to commit to comprehensive immigration reform that respects and fulfills the human rights of all people living and working in the United States by creating a path to citizenship for our 11 million undocumented friends, family and neighbors. While we understand the importance of immigration reform that specifically creates a path to citizenship for Vermont's state's dairy labor force, we also urge you to not take a piecemeal approach. Vermont's migrant workers are part of a larger family and community of 11 million human beings, all of whom deserve a path to citizenship that upholds human rights for all.

The statement below seeks to capture some of the key aspirations of hundreds of immigrant workers who recently gathered at the United Workers Congress. Echoing this powerful process and other nationwide organizing efforts, the people of Vermont are calling on you to uphold your fundamental obligation to ensure the dignity and equality of all people.

We must pass immigration reform that recognizes the universal human rights of all people. We cannot selectively afford rights to some but not all. The reform must ensure equity for all impacted communities, or it is no reform at all. And because we know that democracy starts with the people, the reform must respect the right to participation of communities and ensure a transparent and accountable process.

Our Platform for the Inclusion and Protection of Immigrants includes the following priorities:

Inclusive Roadmap to Citizenship for our 11 million undocumented friends, neighbors, and family members

- Termination of exits, detours, roadblocks and obstacles
- Participation of worker organizations for implementation
- Social safety net protections during path to citizenship

An End to Cruel and Dehumanizing Immigration Enforcement

- Immediate suspension of immigration arrests, deportations and detentions
- An end to collaborations between police and ICE and termination of the failed "Secure Communities" Program
- Protections for workers who expose civil and human rights violations

Protection of Civil, Labor, and Human Rights

- Protections against retaliation for workers

- Protection of workers' rights during employer compliance activities
- Protection against workplace discrimination
- Opposition to any mandatory expansion of E-Verify
- An end to immigration enforcement in workplaces with ongoing labor disputes
- Full overhaul for transparency at the Department of Homeland Security
- Creation of a "labor law enforcement fund" to ensure compliance with all labor laws

Future Flow: Inclusion and Protections for Future Immigrants

- The right of temporary workers to change employers for any reason without impacting status
- Involvement of workers' centers in the process of identifying local workforce availability
- Protection for temporary workers against retaliation, and for the right to organize and collectively bargain
- The establishment of wages and workplace protections for temporary workers to uphold worker and human rights
- An increase in the enforcement of labor laws to ensure compliance with labor standards for all workers
- A humane path to citizenship for temporary workers and their families
- Freedom from debt; no worker should have to become indentured to work
- Prioritization of family unification in all future programs and for all families

Sincerely,

Yanira Aguire, Over Lopez, José Norman Moreno, Sarah Lundy

On behalf of Migrant Justice and the Vermont Worker's Center's thousands of Vermont members