

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

June 19, 2018

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to oppose the Border Security and Immigration Reform Act of 2018 (H.R.6136) and the Securing America's Future Act of 2018 (H.R. 4760) immigration bills. These bills escalate efforts to divide, detain and deport working people, while failing to protect families seeking asylum at our border or provide DACA and TPS holders the pathway to citizenship they deserve. While slashing channels for permanent immigration, the bills also expands abusive temporary work visa programs. This approach is wrong. It not only betrays our values, but also drives down standards for all working people in our country.

Over the past year, the administration has needlessly and cruelly created multiple crises that have dramatically worsened conditions in an already broken immigration system. First, the Department of Homeland Security stripped work authorization from more than a million people with DACA status (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and TPS (Temporary Protected Status). Next, the Department of Justice announced a zero tolerance policy for migrants seeking refuge and began separating children from their families at the border. Now we must resolve the consequences of these policy decisions in a way that does not put other working people and communities at greater risk.

Our family, humanitarian and diversity immigration channels have contributed greatly to the vibrancy our workforce. These pathways are essential for our nation's economic growth and they ensure that working people will arrive with full rights and workplace protections. All workers bring merit to our country – not just those with a college education who speak English. Immigrants and refugees of all skill levels have helped to build and defend our country, and we reject any proposals that suggest otherwise.

At a time when we already face a tightening labor market, drastically reducing channels for permanent immigration will increase the pressure to expand abuse-plagued guest worker programs, as the Securing America's Future Act of 2018 bill does for the agriculture sector. Rather than expanding an already-exploitative model, Congress should strengthen protections for working people by enacting reforms that bring integrity and justice to the H-2 visa programs. The approach pursued in H.R. 4760 betrays our long history as a nation of immigrants by creating a revolving door for hiring exploitable and disposable workers with no right even to change jobs, let alone to settle here and achieve the American dream.

Further, the enforcement provisions in the Securing America's Future Act of 2018 would undermine public safety, cut off funding for local policing, swell the coffers of for-profit detention facilities, and make it easier for abusive employers to retaliate against hard-working people. Absent a broad and inclusive pathway to citizenship, a national E-Verify mandate will

push millions of working people deeper into the shadow economy, further undermining our freedom to join together and advocate for better wages for all.

The labor movement has long fought to correct the imbalance of power within our immigration system in order to build an economy that works for working people. The right way to use immigration policy to boost wages is by expanding worker rights and protections, not by slashing permanent immigration, increasing captive work, or escalating enforcement tactics that cause fear in our workplaces and communities.

Rather than pursuing the anti-immigrant, anti-worker agenda dictated by the White House, Congress should create a well-earned pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and TPS holders, reject the expansion of abusive temporary work visa programs, and maintain our nation's commitment to family unification, refugee resettlement, and welcoming working people from all over the world.

The AFL-CIO urges you to reject these two anti-worker immigration bills and any other efforts to divide, detain and deport working families. Instead, we look forward to working with you on a positive agenda to ensure that all working people have rights on the job and in the community.

Sincerely,



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American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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