



## Labor Rights and Social Justice for Migrant Workers

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### The Problem:

By design or by neglect, the U.S. is now the home for some 12 million documented and undocumented workers. They are embedded in our economy, their families live in our communities, and their children go to our schools. They are an essential part of the economic and social fabric of the nation. While Congress debates issues of law and citizenship, guest- and undocumented workers go to work every day in construction and manufacturing jobs, on farms, in hotels and restaurants, in health services, and in retail stores. How should we provide these workers with basic labor rights?

### Research Evidence:

Migrant workers in both the “guestworker” programs and immigrants in the informal economy play a key role in filling labor market demands. Yet many migrants experience regular conditions of unpaid and substandard wages, hours of work well in excess of legal minimums, frequent workplace injuries and an absence of health and safety protection, and an overall lack of enforcement of applicable workplace laws.

### Proposed Solutions:

- State Departments of Labor should disseminate labor rights information, in the first language of workers, to employers of migrant workers for posting in workplaces.
- The U. S. Department of Labor should enforce basic labor standards for migrant workers, and create work visas that permit labor market mobility.
- The U.S. Congress, working with counterparts in Mexico and Canada, should strengthen of the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation.
- The U.S. Congress should ratify and implement three major international conventions pertaining to the rights of migrant workers: UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families; International Labour Organization Convention Concerning Migration for Employment (No. 97, Revised); and the International Labour Organization Convention Concerning Migrant Workers (No. 143).

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