



30 GOP Reps. Vote for Farmworker Amnesty, Replacement Foreign Workforce

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Thirty GOP legislators voted for a Democrat farmworker amnesty that would push many Americans out of jobs, push billions of dollars of payroll from rural towns to foreign countries, and slash investment in wealth-creating farm machinery.

The total of 30 yes votes is down from 34 yes votes for a similar bill in 2019, despite much-increased pressure from wealthy business groups, farm lobbies, and ethnic activists. The lobbies favor the bill because it provides Democrats with a future ocean of amnestied voters — and it provides farm companies and their investors with an endless supply of very cheap and controllable H-2A visa workers.

The 34-to-30 decline is a testament to the counter-pressure from pro-American grassroots groups, including ALIPAC and the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). But it also reflects the GOP leaders' realization that another amnesty will likely transform the U.S. electorate and sink their political careers.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where investors, Democrats, and ethnic lobbies will spend lavishly to win votes from a few GOP senators from rural states, including Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD) and Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC).

Any GOP converts to the farmworker amnesty will be combined with GOP converts from other Democrat amnesty bills — such as an amnesty for “DACA” migrants or a bill offering more H-2B visa workers for Maine hotels. The combination will perhaps give Democrats the 60 votes they need to transform American politics with imported voters and so sweep the GOP out of power for many years.

Almost 85 percent of the 211 GOP legislators voted against the amnesty.

“We are nearing the end of a pandemic that has left many Americans without work,” said Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX), who was one of the 173 GOP legislators who voted no. “Congress’ priority should be finding ways to encourage American businesses to hire more American workers rather than prioritizing foreign workers. American jobs should first and foremost go to American workers,” he added.

Eight GOP legislators did not vote for or against the farm amnesty bill, which is titled H.R. 1603, the “Farm Workforce Modernization Act.”

A few senior GOP leaders who voted yes for the bill in 2019, voted no in 2021, including Reps. Tom Cole (R-OK) and Steve Stivers (D-OH). Other converts from 2019 included Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-ID).

Several 2019 yes votes did not vote in 2021. They included Reps. Don Young (R-AK) and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL).

The 30 GOP votes for the amnesty and cheap-labor bill were provided by Reps:

Mark Amodei (R-NV),

Cliff Bentz (R-OR),

James Baird (R-IN),

Michael Bost (R-IL),

Rodney Davis (R-IL),

Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL),

Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA),

Andrew Garbarino (R-NY),

Carlos Gimenez (R-FL),

Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH),

Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA),

Chris Jacobs (R-NY),

David Joyce (R-OH),

John Katko (R-NY)

Douglas LaMalfa (R-CA),

Dan Newhouse (R-WA),

Devin Nunes, (R-CA),

Thomas Reed (R-NY),

Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA),

Michael Simpson (R-ID),

Chris Smith (R-NJ),

Lloyd Smucker (R-PA),

Elise Stefanik (R-NY),

Claudia Tenney (R-NY),

Glen Thompson (R-PA),

Fred Upton (R-MI),

Jefferson Van Drew (R-NJ).

FAIR responded:

What happened today is no surprise – lawmakers have taken no initiative to address the crisis and instead are worsening it by advancing bills that incentivize migrants to come to the country illegally. The only crisis, as far as all Democrats and a handful of Republicans are concerned, is the lack of amnesty for illegal aliens already here, and these bills aim to “fix” only that problem.

Senate Republicans must hold firm and oppose both the American Dream and Promise Act and the Farm Workforce Modernization Act if they are brought to the floor in the upper chamber. The border crisis is raging, and the American people are watching – address the crisis, do not exacerbate it.

The bill title is deceptive; the legislation does nothing to actually modernize America’s agricultural workforce. That would require automating many of these jobs using advanced technology and programs designed to give farmers access to those innovations. Further, the framework for improving legal farm labor already exists – fix problems within the current H-2A program. This, and encouraging the adoption of labor- and cost-saving automated harvesting technologies, represents true modernization. Another senseless amnesty at the worst possible time does not.

In a November 2019 hearing, Democrat leader Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) described the corporatist bargain that is intended to provide endless cheap visa workers to businesses and at least two million immigrant voters to Democrats within a decade:

This bill adds wage caps to prevent wages [for H-2A visa workers] going up by more than 3.25 percent in most of the country. Considering that the AEWR rates [Adverse Effect Wage Rate for H-2As] recently went up 23 percent in certain states, this is a big concession [to business]. Those kinds of wage increases would no longer happen under this bill.

These are significant wage reforms — a recent report by the CATO institute found that the bill, if enacted, would have saved farmers \$324 million in labor expenses in 2019 alone.

FWD.us, which represents a group of pro-Democrat West Coast investors, cheered the workers-for-voters swap.