

A lack of U.S. workers interested in or seeking employment in agriculture has compounded the problem. While those in agriculture have seemed to be "crying in the wilderness" about this worker shortage, some have been listening. Senator Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) recently highlighted the unique labor needs of agriculture and the importance of foreign labor in a September 2006 floor statement: "We have one million people who usually work in agriculture. I must tell you they are dominantly undocumented. Senator Craig pointed out the reason they are undocumented is because American workers will not do the jobs. When I started this I did not believe it, so we called all the welfare departments of the major agriculture counties in California and asked—can you provide agricultural workers? Not one worker came from the people who were on welfare who were willing to do this kind of work."

The program, which is most commonly used in Wyoming for bringing in foreign workers, is called the "H-2A Program." The H-2A worker visa program provides a means for U.S. agricultural employers to hire foreign workers on a temporary basis. They fill a labor niche that cannot be met in the U.S. The H-2A program is vital to the western sheep industry; and, it is the H-2A program that has become a nightmare for agricultural producers looking to bring foreign workers to the U.S. legally. It is the H-2A program that the DOL is proposing to modify and "fix."

Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho) summarized the problem this way: "[T]his economic sector, more than any other, has become dependent for its existence on the labor of immigrants who are here without legal documentation. The only program currently in place to respond to a lack of legal domestic agricultural workers, the H-2A guest worker program, is profoundly broken. Outside of H-2A, farm employers have no effective, reliable assurance that their employees are legal. We all want and need a stable, predictable, legal workforce in American agriculture. Willing American workers deserve a system that puts them first in line for available jobs with fair market wages. All workers should receive decent treatment and protection of fundamental legal rights. Consumers deserve a safe, stable, domestic food supply. American citizens and taxpayers deserve secure borders and a government that works. Last year, we saw millions of dollars' worth of produce rot in the fields for lack of workers. We are beginning to hear talk of farms moving out of the country, moving to the foreign workforce. All Americans face the danger of losing more and more of our safe, domestic food supply to imports. Time is running out for American agriculture, farm workers, and consumers. What was a problem years ago is a crisis today and will be a catastrophe if we do not act immediately."

In the proposal out for comment, DOL claims its purpose in re-engineering the H-2A program and the resulting outcomes will be:

Simplify the process by which employers obtain a labor certification.

Increase employer accountability to further protect against violations of program and worker standards.

Efficiencies in program administration that will significantly encourage increased program participation, resulting in an increased legal farm worker labor.

U.S. workers will be better protected from adverse effects when they are competing with workers who are legally present in the U.S. and who are subject to all of the requirements of the H2-A program.

Institute a new auditing process to verify that employers have, in fact, met their responsibilities under the H2-A program.

Alter the current H2-A housing inspection procedures.

The devil is always in the details, however, and we have identified several areas within the proposed changes where more harm than good could occur. Several agricultural groups have joined forces to analyze and prepare comments on these proposed changes.

The WWGA is asking all agriculture supporters and particularly employers who currently, or may in the future, utilize the H-2A program, to comment. Comments can be submitted electronically, which is the quickest and least expensive method.

For those wishing to secure a copy of the proposed changes, they can be found at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=ETA-2008-0001> (click on one of the icons in the first row under "views").

With comments due on a very short timeline, April 14, we have posted helpful information including sample comments on our website at www.wywool.org. Diane Carpenter in our office and I would also be glad to answer questions from those submitting comments on this tremendously important effort.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, please join me as we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month this May.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month was originally established as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week in 1977 by a congressional resolution. In 1992, Congress expanded the week into a month to recognize the countless contributions that Asian Pacific Islander Americans have made to our country.

The month of May is significant to the Asian and Pacific Islander American, APIA, community because it coincides with two important milestones in APIA history: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to the U.S., in May of 1843, and the contributions of Chinese workers toward building the transcontinental railroad, which was completed in May of 1869.

The APIA community is one of the fastest growing populations in the United States. With nearly 15 million residents and growing, APIAs contribute greatly to every aspect of life in America, just as they have throughout our history.

This year's Asian Pacific American Heritage Month theme is "Leadership, Diversity, Harmony—Gateway to Success." As the Senator from California, which has 5 million APIA residents, I am working hard to address the many issues of importance to the APIA community, such as human rights, immigration reform, education, and health care.

As the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, I have been working on issues such as peace and stability in East Asia and the Pacific, human rights issues, environmental protection, and the economy.

I hope you visit my Asian Pacific American Heritage Month web feature to learn more about how the APIA community has shaped our Nation's history. I hope that you will find this information useful and that you will celebrate the rich diversity that is America's greatest strength.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CELEBRATING SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS BASEBALL

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize the 50th anniversary of the San Francisco Giants in San Francisco, CA.

After relocating from New York to San Francisco, San Francisco Giants pitcher Ruben Gomez threw the historic first pitch from the mound at Seals Stadium in San Francisco on April 15, 1958 and 23,448 enthusiastic fans watched the Giants defeat the Brooklyn Dodgers 8-0 on that special day 50 years ago. San Francisco was now home to a part of our national pastime.

After two seasons at Seals Stadium, the Giants moved to Candlestick Park in 1960. Home to the Giants for 40 seasons, Candlestick Park is located on the San Francisco Bay and carried the reputation for being one of the coldest, windiest, and foggiest ball parks in all the country. Despite these less than favorable playing conditions, Candlestick Park stood strong on one of the most frightening days in San Francisco history: October 17, 1989. Candlestick Park was packed with 62,000 fans before Game 3 of the 1989 Bay Bridge Series between the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland Athletics, when the 7.1 Loma Prieta earthquake struck. Thankfully, Candlestick Park withstood the trembler and no one in attendance was injured.

In 2000, the Giants left Candlestick Park and relocated to the brand new Pacific Bell Park in downtown San Francisco. Now known as AT&T Park, the classically designed ballpark offers picturesque views of the city and bay. Today, the home of the San Francisco Giants is widely regarded as one of America's most beautiful stadiums.

In their first 50 years in San Francisco, the Giants have been a model of excellence on the field. In addition to capturing three National League pennants, several members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame have donned the trademark orange and black colors of the Giants: Willie Mays, Juan Marichal, Orlando Cepeda, Gaylord Perry and Willie McCovey. The San Francisco Giants have been a great source of entertainment and pride to their legion of loyal fans over the past half century.

In addition to their achievements on the field, the San Francisco Giants baseball club is also committed to serving their community through a variety of community service programs. From the Giants Community Fund,