



Indiana State Department of Agriculture  
Governor Eric Holcomb  
Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Bruce Kettler, Director

July 20, 2022

Senator Todd Young  
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Mike Braun  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Young and Senator Braun,

As director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, I write to share my support for H.R.1603, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act (FWMA). I firmly believe the Act will go far in securing a stable workforce, while alleviating supply chain issues and rising food prices.

Immigrants account for 73% of the agriculture workforce and in Indiana they are a vital component to our livestock and specialty crop industries. While the demand for food continues to increase, the number of Americans choosing to work in agriculture is decreasing. The current H-2A Visa Program is filled with inefficiencies including enormous amounts of paperwork, long wait times and uncertainty for both employers and workers. We need an immigration process that is efficient and provides a legal and experienced workforce. FWMA does just that by establishing long-term employment opportunities for agricultural workers with the creation of a year-round visa process. To be eligible, workers must pass a background check, have a record free of criminal convictions, and pay an application fee.

Indiana is the tenth largest farming state and agriculture contributes \$31.2 billion to the Hoosier economy. When I speak to dairy farmers or poultry producers, they echo the same refrain, we need workers. While specialty crops in Indiana are typically seasonal, our dairy and poultry sectors need workers year-round and therefore relying on seasonal labor isn't enough. The passage of the FWMA would be transformational for these operations as they could utilize year-round visas.

As food prices continue to increase and the supply chain struggles to keep grocery shelves stocked, it is more important than ever that we grow and maintain a sustainable workforce. I believe the proposed Act can help and I hope you will be supportive.

Thank you for your time and do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce R. Kettler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "B" and "K".

Bruce Kettler, Director  
Indiana State Department of Agriculture  
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