

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative _____:

U.S. immigration policies need to be reassessed. It is estimated that there are between 10 and 15 million undocumented workers in our country today. The fact that these workers find employment within our society indicates that there is a need for their services. It is impossible to imagine that we could deport these productive members of our society without incurring severe social and economic disruptions.

At the same time, our immigration policies criminalize the efforts of people who are contributing to our well being with their labor. Because these workers are undocumented they face many hardships, including the threat of abuse and even death when they try to enter the U.S. (so far this year almost 400 people have died attempting to cross the border), lack of protection from unscrupulous employers, disruption of family life when forced to migrate North to find work, and the constant threat of apprehension and deportation leading to severe economic hardship for their families.

We need immigration policies that respect the contributions of all those who enhance our society through their hard work. It is particularly troublesome that the U.S. promotes policies such as the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA), which displaces workers from traditional industries south of the border, and at the same time criminalizes what is often the most viable response these workers have to support their families in the new economic environment. By forcing people to migrate and then punishing them for doing so, such a combination of policies is unsustainable and in need of immediate reform.

Permanent residency is needed for a sustainable long term solution to our immigration policies. However, in light of the recent natural disasters caused by Hurricane Stan, granting Temporary Protection Status (TPS) to all Guatemalan nationals is the least we can do to continue the spirit of humanitarianism which the U.S. showed to Central Americans following Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

I strongly urge you to stand up for the rights of all hard-working people in this country by supporting reform of our immigration policies to include:

- Work visas for current undocumented workers;
- The ability of temporary workers to apply for permanent residency in the U.S.;
- Family reunification provisions;
- Legal protections for migrant workers;
- Visas for temporary workers to enter the U.S. legally to avoid the threat of abuse or even death by crossing the border;
- Provisions that would prevent human rights abuses and militarization in border areas;
- Granting TPS to Guatemalans affected by Hurricane Stan.

I hope you will take a strong position to promote rational and humane immigration policies.

Respectfully,

Signature

Name

Address