

By: Chavez

H.C.R. No. 69

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The United States Congress has an important
2 opportunity to help Texas agricultural producers stabilize their
3 transient workforce and immigrant workers improve their working
4 conditions and wages; and

5 WHEREAS, Members of the 109th U.S. Congress will consider the
6 Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act of 2005
7 (AgJOBS) to revise and expand the current agricultural guest worker
8 program that allows U.S. growers to import temporary labor from
9 abroad; and

10 WHEREAS, AgJOBS would confer temporary U.S. resident status
11 on an undocumented farm worker who is otherwise admissible to the
12 U.S. under Section 212 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and
13 who applies for such status during the application period and can
14 establish both the worker's entry into the U.S. at least two years
15 before the bill's enactment and the worker's agricultural
16 employment in the U.S. for at least 575 hours or 100 work days,
17 whichever is less, during any 12 consecutive months within a
18 specified 18-month period; and

19 WHEREAS, A farm worker who earns temporary U.S. resident
20 status under AgJOBS could receive an adjustment to permanent U.S.
21 resident status if the worker meets certain requirements, including
22 performing at least 2,060 hours, or 360 work days, of agricultural
23 employment in the U.S. within a specified six-year period; and

24 WHEREAS, AgJOBS is important to farmers and other

1 agricultural employers because it reduces much of the "red tape" in
2 the current agricultural guest worker program, helping to ensure
3 that employers can find legal workers at the times the workers are
4 needed; and

5 WHEREAS, AgJOBS is a priority for undocumented workers who,
6 by some estimates, comprise 75 to 85 percent of the agricultural
7 workforce, because it eliminates their reason for seeking illegal
8 entry into the U.S. with the aid of unscrupulous smugglers, via
9 hazardous transportation, or across inhospitable terrain, and it
10 allows them to look for the best wages and working conditions the
11 way employees of other industries do; and

12 WHEREAS, Another consideration for enacting AgJOBS is its
13 contribution to homeland security; AgJOBS will enhance the safety
14 and security of our food supply by revealing who is planting and
15 harvesting our crops, where the workers come from, and where they
16 are working; and

17 WHEREAS, When an earlier version of AgJOBS was considered by
18 the 108th Congress in 2004, an accompanying letter of support was
19 signed by numerous Texas agriculture associations, including the
20 Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers, Inc., Texas Produce Association,
21 and Texas Vegetable Association; and

22 WHEREAS, Other organizations that support the legislation
23 include the American Farm Bureau, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, United
24 Farm Workers of America, American Federation of Labor and Congress
25 of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), and the National
26 Association of State Departments of Agriculture; now, therefore, be
27 it

1 RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas
2 hereby join more than 400 national, state, and local organizations
3 in requesting that the U.S. Congress enact the Agricultural Job
4 Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act of 2005 to significantly
5 reform immigration law as it relates to agriculture; and, be it
6 further

7 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
8 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
9 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
10 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the
11 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this
12 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a
13 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.