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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GENEVA CHAMBER BOARD OPPOSES MANDATORY E-VERIFY

Geneva, N.Y. (November 1, 2011) - The Board of Directors of the Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce opposes H.R.2885, the mandatory E-verify bill recently passed by the House Judiciary Committee.

E-verify is an electronic employment verification system which, if this bill is signed into law, would be required of all employers regardless of industry or number of employees.

If it should come up for a vote in the House of Representatives we are asking our local Congressional representatives to oppose this bill. We are also asking our Senators Schumer and Gillibrand to oppose its Senate companion, S.1196.

The Chamber opposes H.R. 2885, as it is currently being proposed, for the following reasons:

1. The current E-verification process mandated by this bill has resulted in far too many false positive identifications, which has had a devastating effect on the availability of much needed farm workers;
2. The bill does not address the problems with the current H2A guest worker program. Besides the glacially slow processing problems, it is cumbersome to use, expensive, and not available for some workers (such as those on dairy farms) at all.
3. Nor does the bill address the status of the undocumented workers already in the U.S.

According to a report from Farm Credit East, the number of farms in the Northeast states that employ workers has declined dramatically in the past 10 years. These are farms that create jobs and generate income back into the community for other local businesses. Moreover, other businesses that support farms in one form or another generate many more jobs that would also be in jeopardy due to the negative impact of H.R. 2885.

The Agriculture Council of the Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce is an active group of volunteers within the Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce that encourages the chamber to take stands on pertinent positions in the agriculture industry. Please contact 315-789-1776 for more information.

The Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce is the premier business organization in the Geneva area, representing nearly 500 members.

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