

Senator Charles E. Schumer

313 Hart Office Building

Washington D.C. 20510

March 10, 2010

Dear Senator Schumer,

As members of a Chamber of Commerce in upstate New York, we are very cognizant of the role that agriculture plays in our economy. Farms are businesses that contribute in so many ways to our region, and we are concerned about issues that affect their viability. One important matter that we know you are aware of is the immigration situation and the way it impacts farms. We thank you for your support for reform of our nation's approach to immigrant labor, and encourage you to continue to work for a more sensible and humane way to deal with this critical issue.

We have heard many accounts of the impact on our farmers, as they begin each season with uncertainty that they will be able to meet their labor needs. In many cases, the problem is serious enough to cause a decision to be made to not plant certain crops. The raids that have been conducted in our region have been very disruptive, and with racial profiling occurring regularly, have made a nightmare existence for workers. The farmers want to comply with the law, but in many cases, it's hard to know if identification papers are genuine. We could lose some of our most experienced farm workers without changes to our current laws. The situation that has existed for so long now is wearing people down, and we stand to lose more food production to other areas.

Again, we appreciate your efforts and urge you to continue. Farming is a difficult enough proposition as it is, with weather and market conditions and so many other variables to deal with, without having to worry about not being able to manage the farm because of labor shortages that are not necessary. We know you are aware of the problem and are working on the issue currently. We encourage you to include AgJobs or a similar bill that addresses our problems. We are willing to help in any way we can as a Chamber. Thank you for your work on this.

With our very best wishes,

Rob Gladden, President

Laura Pedersen, Chair, Agriculture Committee