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Dear US Representative,

I write to you today out of concern over the passing of the *Legal Workforce Act* and detrimental consequences to agriculture as a result of implementing the E-verify system. My husband and I are 3<sup>rd</sup> generation farmers in central North Dakota. For twelve years we have been utilizing H2A, foreign agricultural workers on our farm. While I fully understand that the vast majority of H2A and undocumented workers work more in the dairy and fruit and vegetable industries, grain farmers utilize these individuals too. I draw this point out because often grain farmers' use of foreign labor is overlooked.

I want safety, but unless reform of the agricultural worker program (H2A) is undertaken then E-verify will put our food supply, jobs and heritage at risk. The simple fact is that most Americans do not want to do the tasks required in agriculture. They view it as below them and that they are too good for manual labor whether skilled tasks or not. If E-verify goes into effect, up to 60% of the labor used on farms around the country will be delayed in arriving or not be available at all.

I know this seems extreme, but it is true! And comes because only 6-7% of the foreign agricultural labor enters the U.S. on an official H2A, seasonal agricultural worker visa. The small percentage is a result of difficulty of the system. The expense and layers of governmental agency red tape make this program a nightmare to use and often involves lawyers and hiring experts that work solely with the program. The system is very cumbersome. Add to that the lack of understanding of the need for labor by the US Department of Labor and it is almost impossible to utilize the system and have it work in a timely manner.

Should E-verify, enforcement only legislation go into affect, reality of it's impact is scary.

- \*\* 50-60% of all farm labor will no longer be available
- \*\* increase in food imports
- \*\* food prices will rise approximately 6%
- \*\* food production will fall by \$30-60 billion
- \*\* increase in already unstable work force
- \*\* farms will decrease in profitability
- \*\* increase of food, fiber and fuel waste on planted lands
- \*\* vast amounts of land will go unplanted

So I ask, do we want to import workers or import food? Do you want to force farmers to abandon their farms and ranches? Do you want to see a system that respects those that work to provide for others and better themselves or one that ignores the needs of a business and livelihood sector in which we ALL depend on-- Agriculture?

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns, (701) 220-3168 or skheger6@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time,

Katie Heger  
Farmer