

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

“The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, S. 744”

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

Responses from United Farm Worker President Arturo Rodriguez to questions from Senator Jeff Sessions

Submitted May 3, 2013

**1. If S. 744 were to become law, do you believe that the Department of Homeland Security would deport those who enter the country illegally or overstay their visas after the bill’s enactment?**

Last year, the Department of Homeland Security deported about 410,000 individuals who entered the country illegally or overstayed their visas. We see nothing that would indicate that DHS will not continue to enforce the law in the future regardless of the passage of S. 744.

It is our hope, however, that at least in the agriculture sector, passage of S. 744 will greatly reduce the future flow of illegal entrants. In particular, the Blue card program is intended to create a more stable, domestic workforce of experienced farm workers. We can further insure against additional illegal migration by improving farm worker working conditions and increasing earnings for farm workers through longer periods of employment.

Your goal of reducing illegal immigration may be better served by such reforms than by simply focusing on deportations. The prospect of employment is a magnet of unauthorized workers. To the extent that job opportunities are secured by legal workers in a more stable labor market, the pull factor for illegal immigration is reduced.

**2. If S. 744 were to become law, how many total new immigrants, including those currently here illegally who would be granted some form of legal status and those who would be admitted to the country under all categories of chain migration, would be added to the United States over a ten-year period following the date of enactment and over a fifteen-year period following the date of enactment?**

We can only respond with respect to the situation of the farm workers in the United States. We believe that approximately 1.2 million individuals work during the course of the year in U.S. agriculture without legal status. If S.744 becomes law, we believe about 80% or about 1 million farm workers currently present in the U.S. would be eligible for the Blue Card program.