



MFBF President Ed Davidian Calls For Reform Of H2A Temporary Ag Visa Program At Press Conference

NORTHBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS -

Feb. 21, 2017 - The H2A visa program, which allows U.S. farmers to employ foreign nationals in the United States for temporary or seasonal agricultural work, has become increasingly difficult for Massachusetts farmers to navigate, according to Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation President Ed Davidian during a press conference today at his farm in Northborough. He also discussed how to make the H2A program more flexible in order to meet the needs of more farmers.



"There are fewer and fewer willing and able U.S. farm workers, however, immigrants can help fill the gaps," said MFBF President Ed Davidian who farms in Northborough. "But the H2A program has become costly, bureaucratic and highly complicated to use."

The broken system has caused crisis-level worker shortages on many American farms leading to a loss of revenue. In recent years, the share of fresh fruits and vegetables consumed by American families that was imported has grown by 79.3 percent. Labor issues explain an estimated 27 percent of that market share loss.

Had U.S. fresh fruit and vegetable growers been able to maintain the domestic market share they held from 1998-2000, their communities would have enjoyed a substantial economic boost, resulting in an estimated \$4.9 billion in additional farming income and 89,300 more jobs in 2012 alone. U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would have been \$12.4 billion higher in 2012.

"The ideal approach would be enforcement with an adjustment of status and a redesigned guest worker program," Davidian said. "This approach would result in no increase in food prices. There would be minimal decreases in fruit, vegetable, grain and livestock production."

They key to reforming the system will be the ability of both political parties to work together, Davidian said. Instability in the agricultural workforce places the U.S. food supply at risk and increasing immigration enforcement without also reforming our worker visa program will cost America \$60 billion in agricultural production. The time for an evolutionary H2A program is now,

Davidian said.

The press conference also marks the launch of New American Economy's [Map the Impact](#) - a campaign to highlight the power of immigrants in communities across the country. Visit New American Economy's Map the Impact website for state, city and district information that explains the influence of immigrants in the United States.

More information about immigration can be found at www.newamericaneconomy.org.

###

About the

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation

*The **Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation** is a non-profit organization representing nearly 6,000 family members across the Commonwealth. MFBBF is an advocate for farmers, run by farmer members who develop policies through its grassroots process. Its mission is "to protect the rights, encourage the growth, and be of service to its members, in the best interest of agriculture."*

For more information about the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, please visit www.mfbbf.net.

About the **New American Economy**

***New American Economy (NAE)** brings together more than 500 Republican, Democratic and Independent mayors and business leaders who support immigration reforms that will help create jobs for Americans today. NAE members include mayors of more than 35 million people nationwide and business leaders of companies that generate more than \$1.5 trillion and employ more than 4 million people across all sectors of the economy, from Agriculture to Aerospace, Hospitality to High Tech and Media to Manufacturing. Learn more at www.NewAmericanEconomy.org*

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, Inc, 249 Lakeside Ave, Marlborough, MA 01752

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by info@mfbbf.net in collaboration with

Constant Contact 

Try it free today