



**FEDERAL ISSUE: IMMIGRATION REFORM**

**POSITION:** FNGLA supports comprehensive immigration reform enabling nursery and landscape industry employers to hire and retain a sufficient and properly documented workforce.

**BACKGROUND:** Federal government statistics suggest as much as 70 percent of the agricultural workforce in the United States lacks proper work documents. Nursery growers face a worsening labor situation as many fear a significant portion of their workforce lacks proper legal work authorization documents. The current H-2A agricultural guestworker program fails to offer a reliable labor safety net when too few domestic workers are available and willing. Less than two percent of the nation's seasonal agricultural workforce needs are met through the cumbersome and litigious H-2A program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor.

FNGLA embraces two broad principles for over-due reform of the nation's immigration laws: control our borders and serve the economic needs of our nation by matching willing workers with willing employers. FNGLA is committed to comprehensive reform that will benefit all sectors of the nursery and landscape industry.

Comprehensive reform will provide experienced nursery, landscape and other workers, who have been supporting the American economy with their labor, a path to come forward and be identified so they can earn over time the right to adjust to legal resident status. Legislation must also streamline the H-2A guestworker program to allow nursery growers and other agricultural producers to hire foreign workers when domestic workers are unavailable.

A comprehensive approach to immigration reform will provide the needed assurance to nurseries and landscape firms that their employees do, in fact, have legal authority to work in this country. To provide stability to the nation's workforce, legislation must provide for experienced workers to come "out of the shadows" and earn over time the right to adjust to a permanent legal status in the United States. Globalization makes immigration inevitable. In the dangerous world after 9/11, comprehensive immigration reform will actually strengthen national security and enhance food safety by identifying and keeping better track of foreign nationals who live and work in the United States performing the jobs most Americans no longer wish to do.