

**Domestic Fair Trade Association
Statement on Immigration Reform
Passed by Membership 2009**

Background:

During the December 2008 annual meeting, DFTA members approved the following by consensus:

*The DFTA endorses the reform of U.S. immigration policy
to conform with DFT principles.*

It was also agreed that a more complete resolution would be developed in January 2009, and voted on by the membership by March 1, 2009.

The DFTA recognizes that current immigration policy does not reflect the values and vision of the DFTA. The DFTA also recognizes that many immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, originate from rural farming communities. Many have been displaced by the economic and environmental consequences of unfair trade policies, such as NAFTA, that have undercut the welfare of local communities on both sides of the border. Fair trade, both domestic and international, in both policy and practice, is one of the many tools needed to address the root causes of this most recent surge in migration.

Final DFTA Resolution on Immigration Policy:

Whereas DFTA principles call for respect for workers' human and labor rights,

Whereas in recent years Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has dramatically increased workplace and community raids resulting in widespread detentions of immigrant workers and their families, and separation of families,

Whereas farmers and other employers are facing instability in their labor supply exacerbated in large part by this increase in ICE raids,

And whereas the federal government has failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform that will satisfy farmers' and other employers' labor needs while at the same time respecting fundamental workers' rights,

Therefore DFTA calls for just and comprehensive immigration reform that meets the mutual needs of immigrants and their families, and employers. Comprehensive immigration policy for all workers should be modeled on sensible compromises presented in the McCain-Kennedy Immigration bill and *The Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act* ("AgJobs"). AgJobs would provide farmers with needed labor and reform current guest worker programs to make them more accessible

to small-scale farmers, while correcting the injustices of the current program by granting guest workers legal rights equal to resident workers and providing a path to citizenship. DFTA calls for this same type of approach to be applied in general to undocumented immigrants and their families in formulating a comprehensive approach to immigration policy. In addition, regularizing the status of those workers already here will provide a real and needed benefit to employers by replacing the fear of arbitrary detention of workers with a stable and reliable workforce, and strengthen the fabric of the communities in which they work.

Immigration policy should be based on:

- A path to residency for those already here, prioritizing family unification (earned adjustment of status)
- Full and equal labor rights for immigrant workers, including
 - the right to organize,
 - the right to change jobs,
 - full access to the U.S. legal system and enforcement of labor protections

In addition, DFTA calls for:

- A suspension to workplace and community raids while we work towards comprehensive immigration reform
- An end to the criminalization of undocumented status
- Due process and a full respect for Constitutional, civil, and human rights of immigrant workers and those in detention
- An immigration policy that focuses on humane solutions and not divisive and ultimately counterproductive initiatives such as building a Wall along United States borders.

Talking Points:

- The AgJobs bill is a compromise proposal that has the support of an unusually broad coalition of employers and industry groups, workers' organizations, unions, the faith community, and advocates. To learn more about AgJobs, and to see a list of Congressional sponsors and 850 supporting organizations: http://www.farmworkerjustice.org/Immigration_Labor/AgJOBS_Info.htm
- Comprehensive immigration reform, including a path to residency for undocumented immigrants already in the U.S., is supported by a strong majority of people: The organization America's Voice recently found in polls taken that 60% of people favor immigration reform over 33% who favor an enforcement-based approach; 67% favored a path to residency over 13% who did not.¹
- Many organizations and faith-based groups have denounced the routine violation of Constitutional rights that occur during raids and the subsequent

¹ <http://www.immigration08.com/2008/polls>

detention and deportation process conducted by I.C.E. For example, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for an end to workplace raids, saying that the "sweeping nature of the raids -- which often involve hundreds of law enforcement personnel with weapons -- strike fear in immigrant communities and make it difficult for those arrested to secure basic due process protections, including legal counsel."²

- Most undocumented immigrants pay taxes but are ineligible for most public programs, in effect subsidizing the U.S. economy. In 2005 the Social Security Administration estimated a \$520 billion surplus from undocumented workers' contributions. Many states, including Texas, Oregon, and Iowa have found state surpluses from state taxes paid by undocumented immigrants. Immigrants (undocumented and documented) are also less likely to commit crimes than those born in the U.S.³

² US Catholic bishops condemn US immigration raids, Sep 10, 2008

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hVy3YiTS1DmaZX7xxv2tZ87BQG7w>

³ Immigration Policy Center, From Anecdotes to Evidence: Setting the Record Straight on Immigrants and Crime

<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/index.php?content=fc0800910>

Undocumented Immigrants as Taxpayers <http://immigration.server263.com/index.php?content=fc071101>