

**Life in the**  
**116<sup>th</sup> Congress**

***National Council  
of Agricultural Employers  
Annual Meeting  
February 5, 2019***



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# 2019: A Divided Congress

- ▶ GOP Senate
- ▶ Democratic House
- ▶ Immigration Reform
- ▶ International Trade

# 2019: A Divided Congress

- ▶ GOP Senate
  - ▶ Net gain +2 (Now 53-47)
  - ▶ Still need 60 for legislation
  - ▶ Biggest impact: Federal judges
- ▶ Mitch McConnell (R-KY) still in charge
- ▶ John Thune (R-SD) the new #2

# 2019: A Divided Congress

- ▶ GOP Senate
- ▶ Major committee chair change:
  - ▶ Grassley (R-IA) to Finance
    - ▶ Trade, Taxes
  - ▶ Graham (R-SC) to Judiciary
    - ▶ Immigration, Judges

# 2019: A Divided Congress

- ▶ Senate Democrats
  - ▶ Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
  - ▶ Dick Durban (D-IL)

# 2019: A Divided Congress

- ▶ A complete change in the House of Representatives:
  - ▶ Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has the Speaker's gavel again
  - ▶ Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD)
  - ▶ Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC)

# 2019: A Divided Congress

- ▶ Key House Committee Chairs:
  - ▶ Judiciary: Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)
    - ▶ Immigration
  - ▶ Ways & Means: Richard Neal (D-MA)
    - ▶ Trade
  - ▶ Agriculture: Collin Peterson (D-MN)
    - ▶ New Farm Bill
  - ▶ Intelligence: Adam Schiff (D-CA)
    - ▶ Investigations

# 2019: A Divided Congress

- ▶ For House Republicans:
  - ▶ Minority Leader: Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)
  - ▶ Minority Whip: Steve Scalise (R-LA)
  - ▶ Minority Conference Chair: Liz Cheney (R-WY)



# 2019 in Congress

- ▶ The case can be made:
- ▶ “All roads lead through California” in the House
  - ▶ Speaker
  - ▶ Minority Leader
  - ▶ 4 Committee chairs\*
  - ▶ 20 Subcommittee chairs\*
  - ▶ All House Committees have at least one California member\*

▶ \*Source: Los Angeles Times

# 2019 in Congress

- ▶ By the issues:
  - ▶ International Trade
  - ▶ Immigration Reform

# International Trade

- ▶ U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) completed
- ▶ New South Korea deal done
- ▶ Talking with the EU and Japan
- ▶ Preliminary discussions with the UK
- ▶ China
  - ▶ Big, big issue: Intellectual Property
  - ▶ March 1<sup>st</sup> is the next big deadline

# International Trade

- ▶ U.S. tariff assistance for farmers
  - ▶ \$12.2 billion announced in August
  - ▶ First round of payments made in September
  - ▶ Second round made in December

# Immigration Reform

- ▶ The most difficult political issue of our time
- ▶ All agree our system is broken
- ▶ Neither party will work with the other to fix the system

# Immigration Reform

- ▶ Agriculture's needs in reform
  - ▶ Adjustment of status for current improperly documented workers
    - ▶ And immediate family
  - ▶ Access to legal new workers in the future
    - ▶ Including workers for year-round jobs
- ▶ “Blue Card” bill introduced in Senate and House
- ▶ Must get it right. Mandatory E-Verify will be required with any Ag worker visa reform

# Immigration Reform

- ▶ Key Leads in Congress:
- ▶ Senate
  - ▶ Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
  - ▶ Thom Tillis (R-NC)
  - ▶ Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
- ▶ House
  - ▶ Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
  - ▶ Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)
  - ▶ Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)
  - ▶ Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)

# Immigration Reform

- ▶ Agriculture Workforce Coalition Principles: Mission Statement
- ▶ Principles for Agricultural Labor Reform
- ▶ *Mission Statement: The Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC) brings together organizations representing the diverse needs of agricultural employers across the country. AWC serves as the unified voice of agriculture in the effort to ensure that America's farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce now and in the future.*
- ▶ The agricultural industry has united to present a legislative framework that provides actionable solutions for agriculture's labor needs. Any legislation must include assurance of a future workforce both from a flexible and efficient visa program and by retention of current workers. A legislative solution must address:



# Immigration Reform

- ▶ Agriculture Workforce Coalition Principles: Current Workforce
- ▶ **Respect for and recognition of the importance of our current experienced workforce to the sustainability of US based agricultural production and food security by providing:**
- ▶ a mechanism for qualifying farmworkers to continue working in agriculture and/or reside in the United States based on agricultural work experience and commitment;
- ▶ a mechanism to earn legal status to work and/or reside in the United States based on agricultural work experience and commitment; and
- ▶ a mechanism to protect immediate family members.

# Immigration Reform

- ▶ Agriculture Workforce Coalition Principles: Future Workers
- ▶ Recognition of the critical need for access to a current and future workforce for the sustainability of US based agricultural production and food security by providing a flexible and efficient agricultural worker visa program that includes:
  - ▶ availability to all agricultural producers without regard to the temporary, seasonal or year-round nature of the job;
  - ▶ a fair and predictable market-based approach to wages and benefits that does not unduly impede US competitiveness;
  - ▶ flexibility in the length of visas to address the needs of different agriculture sectors;
  - ▶ mobility; and
  - ▶ ability to meet any future industry production expansion labor needs with no arbitrary limits.

# Life in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress

*National Council of  
Agricultural Employers  
February 5, 2019*

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