



Office of the Attorney General

40 Capitol Square SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-1300

CHRISTOPHER M. CARR
ATTORNEY GENERAL

www.law.ga.gov
(404) 458-3600

June 2, 2025

Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
511 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
521 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
2267 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries,

On behalf of Georgia Agriculture, I write today out of great concern for the continuously rising Adverse Effect Wage Rates (AEWR) for H-2A guest farm workers, which were arbitrarily created and are having a serious and harmful effect on Georgia farmers. I strongly urge the passage of H.R. 1624 – *Supporting Farm Operations Act of 2025* for two reasons. First, the legislation directs the Secretary of Labor to return AEWR rates back to those of 2023 and freeze the rates from further increase through at least December 31, 2026. Second, the bill clarifies job classification, directing the Secretary of Labor to evaluate the primary duties of employees performing more than one job to determine the applicable required wage rate. These actions would temporarily reduce the required wages to fair rates for jobs as performed, providing relief for our agricultural producers.

Agriculture is Georgia's largest industry, contributing approximately \$91.4 billion annually to the state's economy.¹ Georgia leads the nation in the production of peanuts, broilers, pecans,

¹ "Georgia Ag Impact Report," College of Agriculture and Environmental Science, University of Georgia, 2025, <https://discover.caes.uga.edu/georgiaagimpact/index.html#group-section-High-level-stats-hMQXwBafqV>

blueberries, and spring onions. With over 38,300 farms and 9.9 million acres of production to maintain, our farmers require a sizable labor force to harvest their yield within season, driving Georgia's economy and feeding families nationwide.²

I am concerned that farmers in the State of Georgia are required to pay a 9.5% increase in wages in 2025 if they use H-2A labor.³ This compounds the 14% and 7% increases implemented by the Department of Labor (DOL) under the Biden Administration in 2023 and 2024. The DOL uses the Farm Labor Survey (FLS) data provided in the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service's Farm Labor report and Bureau of Labor Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) when determining the H-2A wages. The FLS data and collection methodology is unavailable to the public, causing concern for transparency and accuracy. OEWS data consists of all industry standards, rather than just agriculture, resulting in higher average wages than FLS data. Since many H-2A job descriptions overlap between FLS and OEWS classifications, agriculture employers are forced to pay the higher OEWS wage for the same job. This results in Georgia farmers currently paying H-2A laborers \$16.08 per hour – over twice the federal minimum wage rate.⁴ This rapid increase in required wages over the last few years has rendered the program unaffordable for Georgia farmers.

On December 6, 2024, our office sent a letter to Labor Secretary Nominee Lori Chávez-DeRemer and Agriculture Secretary Nominee Brooke Rollins requesting that these increases not take effect. We also have previously sent a letter to then Labor Secretary Julie Su and then Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack requesting that these increases not take effect, but the Biden administration refused. As such, we urge Congress to act and return these rates to more reasonable levels.

I strongly urge the passage of H.R. 1624 to address the rising AEWR before it causes widespread damage to key Georgia farming operations. We believe the success of our farms is directly tied to the food security, national security, and economic security interests of the United States.

Thank you for your consideration, and please reach out to us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher M. Carr
Georgia Attorney General

² "2024 State Agricultural Overview," USDA National Agricultural Statistical Service, 2024, https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=GEORGIA

³ Samantha Ayoub, "2025 AEWR – Labor Costs Continue to Climb," American Farm Bureau Federation, 2024, <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/2025-aewr-labor-costs-continue-to-climb>

⁴ "H-2A Adverse Effect Wage Rates," Foreign Labor Application Gateway, US Department of Labor, 2024, <https://flag.dol.gov/wage-data/adverse-effect-wage-rates>