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June 21, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Immigration Reform Legislation Before the U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Ryan,

On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), a national construction trade association representing more than 27,500 firms including America's leading general contractors, specialty contractors, service providers, and suppliers, I am writing to urge Congress to reform the nation's immigration system.

The current system has been broken for decades, has placed national security in jeopardy, and has left millions of unauthorized workers in the United States without the ability to lawfully work. The inability of Congress to reform our nation's laws has left the construction industry facing a historic workforce shortage, which is compounded by the lack of any legal immigration process for construction employers to fill needed jobs. Although the bills before Congress this week address some immigration issues, unfortunately they fail to alleviate the industry's workforce shortage.

AGC opposes "The Securing America's Future Act," H.R. 4760. Though the bill would strengthen national security—an AGC priority—through increased investment in border security, it reduces legal immigration. This will, in turn, restrict economic growth and worsen the domestic workforce shortage, especially in the construction industry.

That said, AGC appreciates several provisions in "The Border Security and Immigration Reform Act," H.R. 6136, that help move the immigration debate forward. Such measures include increased investments in border security, addressing DREAMer status, and providing reforms to the visa process. The bill additionally provides reforms to visa issuance and makes some improvements to the immigration system to meet economic and workforce needs.

While the bill also cuts some existing legal immigration programs, it provides an avenue for additional legislative action on needed reforms. Those necessary reforms include a pathway toward earned legalization, extending work authorization for individuals with Temporary Protective Status, and creating a temporary guest worker system that would respond to market and economic needs.

Immigration is a complex issue that impacts many individuals, industries, and employers. AGC is aware of the challenge before Congress. However, for two decades the industry has been

calling for legislative reforms – many of which are bipartisan and commonsense – with little movement. AGC remains hopeful that H.R. 6136 could address some of the immigration issues that have dogged Congress for years and provide a pathway to solving other complex immigration issues in a timely, bipartisan manner.

AGC looks forward to working with you to find legislative solutions that can address the workforce needs of the construction industry while also gaining enough support to be enacted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James V. Christianson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

James V. Christianson
Vice President, Government Relations