

Senate Resolution 715

By: Senators Williams of the 19th, Crosby of the 13th, Hill of the 4th, Ligon, Jr. of the 3rd, Jackson of the 24th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging Congress to expand the eligibility requirements of the H-2A guest worker program;
2 and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Georgia's agricultural industry continues to shine as this state's top economic
4 driver; and

5 WHEREAS, Georgia has almost 48,000 farms consisting of over 10 million acres, but
6 farmers make up only a small fraction of the thousands of Georgians who earn a living in
7 agriculture and agribusiness; and

8 WHEREAS, agricultural business in Georgia is estimated to bring in \$68 billion; and

9 WHEREAS, Georgia's agriculture industry is the primary source of employment in this state,
10 with one in seven employed in agriculture, forestry, or other related field, including
11 processing, shipping, retail, agricultural dealers and suppliers, and tourism; and

12 WHEREAS, the H-2A guest worker program is only available to producers with work needs
13 of a temporary or seasonal nature, but due to the year-round nature of some industries within
14 agriculture, this provision prohibits these, specifically the dairy, poultry, livestock, and
15 ginning industries, from being eligible; and

16 WHEREAS, the H-2A program is currently administered by the United States Department
17 of Labor; and

18 WHEREAS, the current program under the United States Department of Labor is
19 inefficiently run, and there is currently federal legislation in the House that better places the
20 program within the United States Department of Agriculture; and

21 WHEREAS, building on successes of existing state and federal partnerships, State
22 Departments of Agriculture should be considered as cooperating partners in the
23 administration of a federal guest worker program.

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
25 urge Congress to allow states to administer their own H-2A guest worker programs through
26 the monitoring of the United States Department of Agriculture.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
28 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Congress.