

2017 LABOR, JUDICIARY AND TRANSPORTION POLICY STATEMENT

Labor

The Grange has long fought for the rights of both employers and employees to live and thrive, understanding that worker protection and prosperity are not in conflict with company success and solvency. We believe that the hardworking men and women of America's workforce deserve the opportunity to earn a fair wage in a safe work environment and the guarantee that their pensions and subsequent benefits will be protected and preserved. We encourage businesses across the country to be proactive in ensuring the future growth and stability of employee pension benefits and to guard against their loss in the unfortunate event of a company merger or bankruptcy.

The National Grange supports the Agriculture Guest Worker (AG) Act of 2017 for the establishment of the H-2C visa program administered by the USDA. This act will provide an option to both seasonal and year-round labor needs, recognizing that not all agriculture jobs are the same or require the same level of skill or experience. The H-2C visa program better understands the unique needs of the American farm and ranch operations, and the challenges of processing raw, perishable commodities. The AG Act will offer workers and employers more choices in their employment arrangements, with more flexibility and less bureaucratic red tape than the H2A visa program.

The global economy has allowed American businesses to reach markets once inaccessible and has increased the demand for many of our goods, including our agricultural products, in far regions of the world. The Grange continues to be an advocate for the implementation of fair free trade agreements that encourage international commerce while also incentivizing domestic job growth and economic output for American companies. We do not; however, support the bailout of any country, state, or territory that has engaged in wasteful spending and behaved in a financially irresponsible manner.

Judiciary

Since the Grange was organized in 1867, it has been a staunch defender of our Constitution and the rights and privileges it protects for each and every citizen. We are a nation of law and order and as such must work to draft, pass, and maintain legislation aimed at ensuring a peaceful society and a fair judicial system. Our first responders work hard and serve bravely on a daily basis to maintain this order. The National Grange will forever strive to grant them the support and respect they deserve.

The Grange understands that citizens and the officials they elect are the best candidates to write the laws by which we will be governed, and that administrative agencies, commissions and other unelected governing bodies should be prohibited from

drafting and implementing such regulations that dramatically impact our daily lives. We urge elected officials at all levels to periodically review and purge outdated laws and reduce burdensome and unnecessary regulations that stifle economic growth and fundamentally impede the free market system.

We vehemently oppose the use of eminent domain to confiscate such private property for commercial use or any project that does not directly benefit the general citizenry.

Transportation

From the National Grange inception in 1867, the NG has been an advocate for a strong transportation infrastructure. In many ways, agriculture is the “original” business and as such has driven the establishment of a multitude of subsequent industries down the economic food chain, including infrastructure development. The need for farmers to get their products to consumers drove the establishment of our nation’s railroads, highways, and waterways and today continues to drive the development of our national infrastructure.

We continue to support laws requiring drivers to slow down and move over while passing an emergency vehicle that is stopped with lights flashing and believe all drivers should be held responsible for their driving and guard against distractions from cell phones and other such devices. We also support increased visibility devices for school buses. We strongly support technology that enhances the visibility of vehicles, rail cars, bicycles, motorcycles, trucks, etc.

We support the designation of English as our national language and thus believe that all road and highway signage should be printed in English only. We further urge that all drivers’ tests, licenses and permits be printed in English as well.

This policy statement covers 802-IL, 806-NY, 819-WA and portions of the Master’s Address.