

'Bibles, Badges and Business' come together for immigration reform

by [Laura Yuen](#), Minnesota Public Radio
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ST. PAUL, Minn. — Some Minnesota farmers, Christians and business leaders are lending their voices to the fight for immigration reform.

The unusual alliance, which also includes law enforcement officials, is part of a national network known as "Bibles, Badges, and Business." The coalition is urging Congress to keep working on a solution to the country's immigration problems when lawmakers reconvene next week.

Patrick Lunemann, a dairy farmer from Todd County and president of the Minnesota Milk Producers, said anti-immigration voices, including those in his own backyard, are drowning out what he considers to be the silent majority.

"Extremism hasn't just come for a visit. It's taking over in our communities," Lunemann said. "The only way to get away from that is to have one-on-one discussions with our neighbors and our friends about how important the immigration issue is."

Lunemann said if lawmakers can't find a way for new labor to come into the country, the United State will head toward a food-security crisis. He said farmers already can't find enough workers to milk cows and grow crops.

Carl Nelson of the Transform Minnesota evangelical network said a pathway to citizenship has become a personal cause for many pastors touched by stories within their own congregations.

"We've seen that their families are broken up because of our current immigration system," Nelson said. "We see individuals who are trapped in the shadows without a hope for the future, and people who are being treated without dignity and whose self-esteem is being beaten down because of the system we're in."

Nelson said faith leaders need to help change the conversation on immigration in this country.

He was joined today at a panel discussion that also included the Minnesota Farm Bureau, the state's chamber of commerce, and the Minnesota Catholic Conference.

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2013/08/29/bibles-badges-business-immigration-reform-coalition>