

April XX, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the many small and seasonal businesses in our states, we are writing to urge your support for H-2B nonimmigrant visa cap relief.

As you know, seasonal workers provide U.S. businesses in our states with temporary help during peak seasons, which is vitally important to helping those businesses maintain viability and keeping U.S. workers employed. The H-2B program is essential to U.S. employers who are unable find the domestic workforce to fill temporary peak-season jobs in industries including landscaping, resorts and hospitality, construction trades, amusement parks, forestry, circuses, carnivals, food concessionaires, swimming pool maintenance, golf courses, seafood processing, stone quarries, sugar refineries and other seasonal industries. Most of these seasonal businesses need H-2B workers to supplement their American workforce during the spring and summer seasons.

Unfortunately, the H-2B program faces an annual statutory cap of 66,000 workers that is not adequate to meet the demands of a growing economy. The statutory allocation of 33,000 visas for the first half of Fiscal Year 2017 was reached in early January and the 33,000 cap for the remainder of the fiscal year was reached on March 13. Without prompt passage of cap relief for this and the next fiscal year, many employers in our states will be without the critical seasonal workforce they need to operate during their peak seasons. These businesses might fail to fulfill contracts, could be forced to turn away customers, and may, in turn, lay off U.S. workers whose jobs are supported in part by H-2B workers. In some cases, these businesses may even shut down their operations entirely because of their inability to hire H-2B employees.

The H-2B program relies on well-vetted workers who come to the U.S. for seasonal employment and then return home. These workers are not immigrants. They provide an opportunity for U.S. businesses to operate at a greater capacity, retain their full-time workers and contribute to their local communities. Seasonal workers help support many upstream and downstream jobs; every H-2B worker is estimated to create and sustain 4.64 American jobs. In addition, a workable approach to legal immigration that recognizes the needs of our economy, including small businesses aids in the prevention of illegal border crossing activities and helps achieve our border security goals.

We urge you to give strong consideration to provide H-2B cap relief for businesses who need extra help during their peak seasons, and who are trying to do the right thing by using established, legal avenues to hire temporary workers. This relief is urgently needed so that small and seasonal businesses in our states can continue to operate, provide American jobs, and contribute to our economy.

Sincerely,