



**MEDIA AVAILABILITY**  
**December 1, 2010**

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## U.S. CHAMBER AND IMMIGRATIONWORKS USA RELEASE REPORT ON ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE H2B VISA PROGRAM

(WASHINGTON, D.C. – December 1) The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and ImmigrationWorks USA today released a joint report examining the positive economic impacts of the H-2B visa program and its importance to the American business community. The report, "[\*\*The Economic Impact of H-2B Workers\*\*](#)," addresses the attacks by critics who often rely on rhetoric and hypothetical scenarios, not hard economic data.

Key findings of an independent economic analysis conducted for this report show that the H-2B visa program does not depress wages of U.S. workers in similar occupations and H-2B workers do not take jobs from their U.S. counterparts. Supplementing these core findings is testimony from employers who use the program and also several illustrative profiles – of an H-2B employer, an H-2B worker, and a community that relies heavily on an H-2B workforce.

"Employers who use the H-2B visa program are employers determined to follow the law," said Randel K. Johnson, senior vice president of Labor, Immigration, and Employee Benefits for the U.S. Chamber. "While the number of workers in the program is extremely small when compared to the overall US workforce, employers in many sectors count on the H-2B visa program to keep their businesses open and growing, and to create opportunities for U.S. employees. This report documents that the program, strengthened with many safeguards, works as intended, allowing employers to fill jobs when U.S. workers are not available while protecting wages."

As the study indicates, H-2B visa holders play a small but integral role in the U.S. economy. The number of visas is capped at 66,000 per year, and H-2B workers account for less than one-tenth of one percent of total U.S. employment. Despite the small size of the program, many employers who use it say their businesses would have to downsize or close if H-2B workers were not available. And H-2B visas are essential to several regional seasonal industries that sustain the economy in their states: seafood processing on Maryland's Eastern Shore, restaurants and inns on Nantucket, and ski resorts in Colorado, among other businesses.

"Congress and the administration should be looking for ways to expand and improve temporary worker programs, not adding layers of bureaucracy and additional regulations that make the programs all but impossible to use" said Tamar Jacoby, president of ImmigrationWorks USA. "This report leaves no doubt about what must be done: cut burdensome regulation, streamline processing and make temporary worker programs more sensitive to changing U.S. labor market needs."

Currently, companies must meet a complicated set of requirements before they can hire H-2B visa holders, including making extensive efforts to recruit U.S. workers. Employers must file paperwork with four government agencies. They must obtain temporary labor certification from the Department of Labor, and their petition for a foreign worker must be approved by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigrations Services. Businesses must demonstrate that their need for a foreign worker is temporary, and they must pay at least the government-mandated prevailing wage for the job. The program's economic benefits could be significantly enhanced by simplifying these complex requirements and making the cap more flexible and responsive to market forces.

To read the full report, [\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)

ImmigrationWorks USA is a national federation of small business owners advocating immigration reform. The organization links 25 state-based, pro-immigration business coalitions: employers and trade associations from Florida to Oregon and from every sector of the economy that relies on immigrant workers.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.

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