



STATEMENT

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CONTACT

Steven Weiss at (202) 480-2076
sweiss@immigrationworksusa.org

HOUSE REPUBLICANS AFFIRM AN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE

Yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee marked up the Legal Workforce Act (H.R. 2885), which would mandate the federal E-Verify program for all U.S. employers. ImmigrationWorks USA president Tamar Jacoby made the following statement:

After years of stalemate on immigration, some members of Congress convened yesterday to try to chip away at the issue – not solve all the problems with an omnibus fix, but at least address some of the most egregious failings of the system. Mostly, Democrats and Republicans talked past each other, making all too clear why it has been so hard in recent years for Congress to take steps on immigration.

But there was some good news: widespread recognition, at least among Republicans, that steps toward more effective enforcement such as the Legal Workforce Act must be accompanied by provisions that give employers who have made every reasonable effort to hire Americans a way to hire legal foreign workers to keep their businesses open and contributing to the economy.

ImmigrationWorks supports the Legal Workforce Act. We believe employers have a stake in restoring the rule of law in the workplace. And we welcome the prospect of a uniform national standard for worksite enforcement that would preempt the existing and increasingly unworkable patchwork of state and local law on employment verification.

But we were very encouraged to hear a range of members – including committee chair Lamar Smith and passionate advocates Rep. Dan Lungren and Rep. Darrell Issa, Republicans from California – agree that worksite enforcement alone is not enough. Their important message: even in an economic downturn agricultural employers need foreign workers, existing temporary programs are inadequate to meet these ongoing labor needs and Congress must act to create new workable ways for agricultural employers to hire foreign workers legally when insufficient numbers of willing and able U.S. workers are available.

ImmigrationWorks believes these principles apply not just to agriculture but also to a range of other sectors that rely on seasonal and unskilled foreign workers, and we hope Congress will act to provide them all with workable legal visa programs.

**IW USA president Tamar Jacoby can be reached for comment at
202 506-4541.**

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. IW assists these groups with strategic coordination, messaging and grassroots recruitment as they fight for better immigration law in their states and Washington. The organization works closely with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Restaurant Association, the National Association of Home Builders, the Associated General Contractors of America and other leading trade groups. Members of the IW board of directors include Marriott chairman and CEO Bill Marriott, former AZ Rep. Jim Kolbe and syndicated columnist Linda Chavez.