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# THE STATE OF PLAY ON IMMIGRATION

Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce  
February 28, 2018





# WHY IS REFORM NEEDED?

- Does the current system...
  - Promote the rule of law?
  - Promote economic competitiveness and growth?
  - Meet our workforce needs?
  - Adequately provide security from external threats?
  - Uphold and promote American values?



# WHY IS REFORM NEEDED?

- Current System is Dysfunctional
  - 6% of all green cards go specifically to workers
  - 10-year wait for a green card for talented workers
  - Annual H-1B and H-2B visa allotment cap woefully inadequate
  - 70% of Ag workforce is unauthorized
  - 11 million people here and we don't know who they are



# CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF REFORM

- Legal immigration reform
  - More employment-based green cards to create U.S. jobs here by attracting the brightest and hardest-working
    - Greater job opportunities here for American workers
  - Workable guest worker programs to meet our workforce needs
    - Promotes job and economic growth AND reduces the pressure of illegal migration

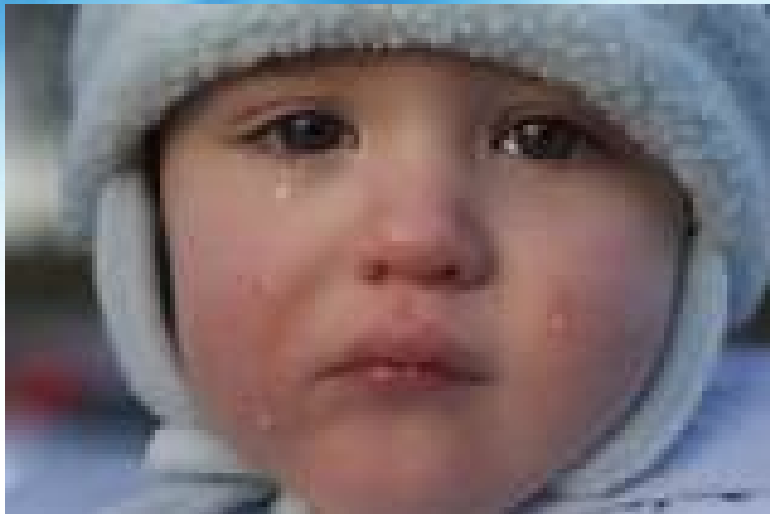


# CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF REFORM

- A workable employment verification system (E-Verify)
  - Preemption of state and local laws will provide clarity and consistency that employers need
- Turning off the “jobs magnet” by discouraging immigrants from coming and/or staying here illegally
- Addressing the Undocumented – DACA



# CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESS





# A FEW IMMIGRATION VICTORIES

- H-2B cap relief in the past few years
- H-4 work authorization
- STEM OPT
  
- But...large scale reform remains elusive



## RECENT DACA HISTORY

- 2012 – Obama established DACA through EO
- 2013 – Senate passes comprehensive immigration bill; House never considers it
- 2014 – Obama established DAPA through EO
- 2016 – DAPA struck down by courts
- 2017 – Trump announces DACA wind-down (Sept. 5)



## **RECENT DACA HISTORY (CONT.) – 2018**

- Jan. 9 – bipartisan/bicameral meeting at the WH with Trump the dealmaker; work on 4 pillars: DACA, border security, family migration, diversity visa
- Jan. 9 – federal judge in SF issues order that DACA program continue
- Jan. 17 – Trump rejects the Graham/Durbin proposal



## RECENT DACA HISTORY (CONT.) – 2018

- Jan. 25 – WH announces its framework
  - 1.8 million Dreamers protected
  - \$25 billion for border security + legal enforcement changes
  - eliminates diversity visa
  - eliminates extended family migration
- Feb. 15 – Senate defeats four immigration measures



## WHAT NOW?

- House – Goodlatte bill we oppose
  - Dramatic cuts to legal immigration
- Attach DACA/border security package to the omni spending bill in March???
- WH and immigration activists appear willing to wait until November/Supreme Court rules



## **H-2B – FACTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

- Annual cap of 66,000 (woefully inadequate)
- Seasonal, non-Ag guest worker program
- Fill only after unsuccessful in hiring American workers
- Many worker protections (wages, etc.)
- Each visa helps support 4.64 American jobs on average
- Inability to fill positions hurts businesses, year-round jobs associated with the businesses, and communities

# H-2B – RWE AND PUSHBACK FROM “RIGHT”

- Returning worker exemption (RWE) for FY 2016
  - A lot of blowback led by then Sen. Sessions (and his aide Stephen Miller) alleging RWE quadrupled the H-2B cap and was putting 200,000 American workers out of work



## H-2B – CAP RELIEF AND PUSHBACK FROM “RIGHT”

- RWE expired in FY 2017, then additional 15,000 slots in cap relief achieved last spring

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PAUL RYAN EXPANDS H-2B BLUE-COLLAR OUTSOURCING PROGRAM FOR 2017

400K 100K 27K 100K



BY NICK LINDSEY · 1 day ago

House Speaker Paul Ryan's new 2017 budget allows the Department of Homeland Security to import at least 20,000 extra foreign blue-collar workers for seasonal jobs in the United States, instead of requiring companies to recruit, train, and pay marginalized Americans.


The bipartisan congressional language creates a headache for Trump and his deputies because it flies in the face of the political attack lines pushed by the Department of Homeland Security of deciding whether to provide extra immigration to US contract workers to companies in order to capture job opportunities for Trump's blue-collar voters.

The new rule is opposed by pro-immigration groups, including the Federation for American Immigration Reform, according to USA's Robert Laro.

Decrease the number of low skilled foreign workers that's a massive achievement

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## H-2B – CURRENT SITUATION

- 2/3rds will not get their positions filled for April 1
- What now?
- Seeking significant cap relief attached to the March spending bill (omni)
- Best case: workers available May 1
- Worst case: no relief



## H-2B – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Contact your Senators and Congressmen
- Urge them to talk to their leaders – McConnell and Ryan – to include cap relief in the omni (spending bill)
- Cosponsor S. 792, H.R. 1627, and H.R. 4207



## MORE INFORMATION?

**<http://www.uschamber.com/immigration>**

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