

IMMIGRATION VISA REFORM

Congress Must Address Immigration Reform that Addresses Workforce Needs

Background:

The U.S. immigration system is broken. The U.S. immigration system is broken, placing national security in jeopardy, leaving more than a hundred thousand current construction workers uncertain futures in the hands of the court system, and leaving no legal option for lesser skilled immigrants to meet workforce needs all of which have contributed to the industry's workforce shortage. Immigration is a complex issue that impacts many individuals, industries and employers but the issues are too important for another decade of inaction.

AGC Message:

Action Needed:

Extend TPS and
DACA programs H.R.
6; Support H.R. 7239's
New Visa Program for
Construction Workers;
Maintain Construction
Industry Access to H-
2B Program.

- **Extend TPS and DACA Work Authorizations.** There are over 100,000 construction workers with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) work authorizations and all of whom status continues to face legal threat. TPS and DACA status holders have played a valued role in our economy and industry for decades. *AGC urges Congress to extend the work authorization (H.R. 6) for Dreamers and TPS holders currently working in the United States.*
- **Create New Temporary Visas for Less Skilled Workers to Address Workforce Needs and Curb Illegal Immigration.** Current legal immigration visas exist for seasonal workers (H-2B), seasonal agriculture work (H-2A) and highly-skilled (H-1B) but there is no legal option for lesser skilled immigrants to meet current or projected future workforce needs in the construction industry. Any legislative attempts to reform the nation's immigration laws must provide a legal option to illegal immigration to meet projected future workforce needs and secure the border by stopping illegal immigrants enticed by work opportunities. The Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act, H.R. 7239, would create a new market-driven, temporary immigration visa program for less skilled, year-round, non-agriculture occupations. *AGC urges Congress to support H.R. 7239.*
- **Ensure the H-2B Visa Program Remains a Viable Option for Construction Employers.** The program needs relief from the statutory cap by exempting returning workers who have followed the law from counting against the limit and allowing the cap to raise when economic conditions warrant. The program needs to be more compatible with the distinct needs of the construction industry. *AGC urges the Administration to address surging demand for workers by providing additional H-2B seasonal worker visas in a timely manner.*