

Dear Editor:

Not enough attention has been given to the problems faced by employers committed to using only legal labor. Landscape contractors, hotels, restaurants, stone quarries, seafood processors, and others cannot find workers to supplement their domestic workforce during busy seasons.

The existing H-2B visa program provides the only means of legal workers when Americans are not available. Unless Congress extends an existing provision of law before the end of 2007, small businesses will not have access to H-2B workers.

Most Americans will not accept seasonal jobs. Before a company can hire an H-2B worker, it must recruit Americans and be certified by its state workforce agency and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The request then must be approved by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Each worker must pass a background interview.

The H-2B program contains an arbitrarily low cap on the number of workers admitted to the U.S. annually. This cap does not reflect the true labor needs of seasonal employers. In the past, companies that otherwise would have been shut out of the program were able to survive because the law exempted H-2B workers who previously participated in the program. These workers have proven that they return home at the end of their employment. Without an extension of this provision of law, most seasonal employers will be unable to hire the needed workers.

Congress must extend the H-2B repeat-worker exemption by passing the "Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act of 2007" (H.R. 1843, S. 988).

Sincerely,

(NAME).