

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEIL L. BRADLEY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT &
CHIEF POLICY OFFICER

1615 H STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20062
(202) 463-5310

May 21, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable R. Alexander Acosta
Secretary
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Nielsen and Secretary Acosta:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce urges you to take immediate action to authorize the maximum number of H-2B visas allowed by law. Without swift action on your part, employers across a range of industries, many of which are small businesses, will be unable to meet their workforce needs in the spring and summer months forcing them to reduce and in some cases cease operations.

The consequences of inaction, or even delayed action, are widespread and cannot be overstated. As companies reduce or cease operations, the American workers they already employ will be harmed and other businesses that supply goods and services to H-2B employers will be adversely impacted. Communities that rely on seasonal industries are likely to experience negative economic effects.

The 66,000 annual quota for H-2B visas is woefully inadequate to meet the seasonal labor needs of a whole host of businesses. With the unemployment rate currently at 3.9%, employers are having significant problems meeting their workforce needs; not surprisingly, employers have filed more H-2B labor certifications than they did at this point in time last year. In fact, the Department of Labor's most recent publicly available data on H-2B labor certifications indicate that for the first half of the fiscal year, the Department certified a need for 117,986 H-2B workers in the U.S.¹ This number will increase as additional positions are certified. Therefore, we urge you to allocate the maximum number of visas allowed under law, which per the notice issued in the Federal Register last year, is an additional 64,716 visas.

Quick action authorizing the maximum number of H-2B visas will enable American businesses to continue and expand their operations for the benefit of their American workers, their customers, and the communities in which they operate. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

¹ https://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/pdf/PerformanceData/2018/H-2B_Selected_Statistics_FY2018_Q2.pdf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neil L. Bradley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Neil L. Bradley