

H-2B Workforce Coalition Applauds Committee Passage of Labor-HHS Bill

(WASHINGTON, DC) -- The H-2B Workforce Coalition applauded the work of the Senate Labor Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, which included in its mark-up of its yearly spending bill important provisions that will help keep American small businesses open and sustain American jobs.

The Senate Appropriations Committee considered the legislation last week, and is hoped to reach the floor sometime this summer.

The provisions will instruct regulatory agencies to make every effort to make the H-2B Visa program more workable for the small business community. This year, severe back-ups at these regulatory agencies, including the Department of Labor and the Department of Homeland Security, put American jobs at risk by making it much more difficult for small businesses to stay in business by delaying the arrival of workers who need the visas to legally work in the United States.

“The hotel industry's continued growth and success is attributable in many ways to the hardworking employees and workforce who operate our lodging facilities, especially during peak tourism seasons,” said **Brian Crawford**, vice president of Government and Political Affairs at the American Hotel & Lodging Association and Co-Chair of the H-2B Workforce Coalition. “We applaud the leadership of Chairman Roy Blunt for recognizing the vital role the H-2B program has on hotel industry employers who must fill critical job functions during high-demand seasons when they cannot find American workers. We thank Senator Blunt for his leadership to help ensure our communities remain vibrant while keeping our businesses running by providing American employers the tools they need to recruit workers for temporary employment in this country.”

“Our Senator Roy Blunt, as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Labor HHS subcommittee, recognizes that bad federal rules hurt employees and employers,” says **Lorelei Schoendienst** of Luehr’s Rides, a Missouri mobile amusement business.

“We appreciate his leadership to provide guidance on process regarding determining prevailing wages and defining term of seasonal need. Unelected bureaucrats often make rules that make no sense.”

“The H-2B program allows our company to fill temporary seasonal jobs that support our American workforce and allow us to serve the community. Thanks to Senator Blunt and the entire appropriations committee for recognizing that onerous regulations and processing delays make the program costly, unpredictable, and jeopardize American jobs. The relief provided by the committee will benefit our American and H-2B workers and ensure that we will be able to continue to provide our customers with high quality service,” said Maurice Dowell, President of Dowco Enterprises Inc., one of the companies that faced processing delays.

Studies show that for every H-2B visa that is issued, 4.6 American jobs are sustained: “The helping hands of temporary and seasonal H-2B worker lift up the job security and success of thousands upon thousands of American workers employed in industries like horticulture and landscaping. Employers need balance and certainty, and so AmericanHort thanks the Senate appropriators who saw fit to again include positive H-2B provisions in their version of the Labor-HHS funding bill,” said AmericanHort senior vice president **Craig Regelbrugge**.

Sabeena Hickman, the Chief Executive Officer of NALP, agreed: “On behalf of our nation’s landscape professionals, I’d like to thank the committee for recognizing the important role the H-2B program serves in allowing America’s seasonal businesses to thrive. In its wisdom the committee was able to see through the rhetoric, understand the tremendous value that results through H-2B, and recognize that without this crucial program many businesses would be forced to cut contracts, scale back business operations, or take other actions that place full time American jobs at risk.”

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