



May 13, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conyers:

I learned with great intrigue that the U.S. House Immigration Subcommittee approved H.R. 4080, a bill which intends to create a special "non-immigrant classification" for fashion models. Apparently, we cannot attract, retain or train enough fashion models in our nation today. Hence, an effort is underway to alter the regulations related to foreign fashion models who reside in our nation courtesy of H-1B or similar status.

While I cannot opine on the need for additional fashion models, it would seem that we have enough pretty faces that can effectively navigate a runway that such an allowance would be unnecessary. Nevertheless, I trust that the House Immigration Subcommittee saw appropriate need to increase the numbers of foreign models through legislative action. Why not, then, consider H.R. 1843, the "Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act?"

As you know, Congress had previously indicated that it will not consider targeted immigration-related measures such as H.R. 4080 without 'comprehensive immigration reform'. Clearly, this bill, which some have termed the "Ugly American Bill", is related to immigration and calls for a 25% increase in the number of fashion models exempted under current regulations. One can rightly assume this effectively lifts the stated Congressional ban on targeted immigration-related reform.

Why are we targeting foreign fashion models, while punishing restaurants, hotels, and other seasonal businesses that desperately need H-2B visa workers to fill necessary jobs? Are more foreign models a matter of greater national interest than tourism, one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in our nation? Will attracting more foreign fashion models do more to reverse our economic downturn than simply meeting the past levels of support for our tourism industry? I think not. To blindly ignore the need of thousands of small and seasonal businesses, while making foreign fashion models a priority, may appear to some to signal the death of common sense. More over, it is poor public policy to deny an important measure that will no doubt boost our economy and help tourism.

Page 2

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the small and seasonal businesses in the Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina, I ask you to allow H.R. 1843 to move through the Judiciary so that the United States Congress can help tourism, an industry that desperately needs (and deserves) your assistance. This week marks National Tourism Week and I can think of no better time than now for you to offer your support for this important measure.

With warmest regards, I am,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Dean". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brad Dean
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cc. Rep. Henry Brown
Rep. Zoe Lofgren