



## Restaurant Owner Urges Extension Of Visa Program

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William Zammer Jr. of Mashpee spent a productive day on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, Wednesday as one of several business owners urging Congress to allow foreign workers to continue to come to the United States on temporary work visas.

Mr. Zammer, whose business, Cape Cod Restaurants operates the Coonamessett Inn, the Flying Bridge restaurant, Tugboats in Hyannis, and the restaurant at Pine Hills Golf Club, brings about 100 Jamaicans to Falmouth annually on the H2B visa program to work from April through October.

Employing about 300 staff overall, Mr. Zammer hires about 200 workers for the summer season only.

He began using the H2B visa program about eight years ago as a response, he said, to the “documented lack of temporary, seasonal workers on Cape Cod.”

He told members of Congress and others attending the House Judiciary Subcommittee Oversight Hearing, “On Cape Cod, our cost of living, housing prices and significantly older resident population lead to the scarcity of seasonal workers.”

Calling the six-hour hearing “one of the more interesting things I’ve ever done in my life,” Mr. Zammer said that he believes there may be progress on the issue in the next couple of weeks.

After making his speech, Mr. Zammer also participated in correcting some misconceptions and concerns on treatment of workers in other parts of the country. Mr. Zammer said it sounds like there have been some abuses in the South and those must be corrected.

For his part, though, he said he pays his workers a minimum of \$10 an hour, and with the rate of return at 80 percent, he believes they enjoy their jobs here.

There is a possibility Congress may approve an exemption for returning H2B workers, a measure they have taken over the last several years. The bill would then need to be approved by the Senate and would likely need to be attached to another, larger bill for a signature by the President.

Mr. Zammer said yesterday that he has been fortunate that Jamaicans who have returned to work for him for many years have contacted friends and family who are in the United States on H2B visas working for ski resorts, and some of those people have extended their visas in order to work for him this summer.

“We still need people,” he said. “Our problem now is what happens at the end of the season.” Mr. Zammer has a strong wedding business in the fall and college students and other younger workers often leave in mid-August.

Because most of the workers have been coming back for years, they are already trained, so training new workers is another big hurdle to get through this year.

Business this summer, in terms of advance wedding bookings and golf outings, looks to be on par with past years, though, he said, each event seems to have fewer people, 180 instead of 200, for example.