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KEITH CRAIN: The Grand Hotel sure deserves a break

By [Keith Crain](#)

There are few, if any, places in Michigan that do more for our reputation as well as generating millions of tourist dollars. This icon of a resort on the wonderful Mackinac Island has been a tourist destination for folks from all over the world for more years than any of us can remember.

The Musser family, Dan Sr. and his son Dan Jr., have taken such pride in the management of this jewel that it is a resort of which we all can be proud.

One of its charming characteristics has been the use of imported labor for the last umpteen decades. People have spent six months or more working at the hotel and then returning to their countries at the end of the season. It's a custom that has worked well and was good for tourism, the Grand Hotel and the men and women who spent their summers working on Mackinac Island.

But one of the ugly byproducts of Sept. 11 has been a toughening of import visas for temporary workers. An obscure provision of the visa cap, H2B, has in the recent past made it more and more difficult to allow these workers to return.

It's a ridiculous provision that is losing money for the Grand and imperils a tourist institution that deserves better.

It's time for U.S. Sens. Levin and Stabenow to take the lead on this injustice and get it settled once and for all.

For decades this hotel has been a magnet for all sorts of other tourist institutions that generated millions of dollars not just for the Grand but for all the other facilities in our state where folks spent money on the way to and from the Grand Hotel.

I would hope that our governor and our two U.S. senators can do what has to be done to ensure that this Mackinac Island institution can continue to attract the legions of tourists it has over the years.

Sen. Levin prides himself on his intimate knowledge of foreign affairs. Now is the time to apply that knowledge to one of his most important Michigan businesses. Sen. Stabenow should be able to use her considerable influence to help this important institution. And I would hope that our governor can continue to push for help from Lansing.

The Grand Hotel is a great tourist facility that deserves our help. It's too important to ignore.