

Unfettered Letters

February 02, 2008

Foreign worker visas

Regarding "[In the shadow of the cap; U.S. businesses find they're only allowed half the number of seasonal helpers](#)" by Diane Stafford (1/29, Business): Congress provided for only 66,000 H-2B seasonal work visas annually. This year (like last year) seasonal employers who want to hire legally meet the quota instantaneously. Now, there are no H-2B visas and no way to hire foreign workers legally until next year.

Missouri and Kansas seasonal employers spent months and thousands of dollars on Missouri and Kansas state-supervised recruitment trying to hire American workers. The federal government, through the Department of Labor, issued them certifications that no U.S. workers are available for these seasonal jobs, after determining that they are offering appropriate wages. But there are no H-2B visas to be had.

Missouri and Kansas employers are faced with a choice between closing down their businesses and hiring undocumented workers.

For hiring undocumented workers, an employer can go to jail under federal law. Under newly proposed Kansas and Missouri law, their business licenses can be taken away.

I guess this brings us back to choice No 1: Might as well just close your business.

Legislators, instead of killing our seasonal businesses that are trying to do the right thing, please act to save them by making legal visas available.

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Thank you to Diane Stafford for "In the shadow of the cap." I am a "seasonal" business owner, as well. We applied for visas and were approved but were relying on our government to extend the "Save our Small and Seasonal Business" amendment for our returning workers. As you heard, getting a new visa is nearly impossible.

This has a huge economic impact on the small/seasonal businesses as well as the vendors we use throughout the year (Sherwin Williams, Home Depot, equipment sales, truck sales, insurance agents, etc.) to the tune of at least a half a million dollars annually with our small business alone. We all lose.

Do you want to pay \$10,000 to paint your house or \$10 a pound for potatoes, tomatoes or strawberries? No, you don't. But without these "legal" workers, you can more than likely bank on that.

I never in my life thought that doing something right was so hard to do. We jump through the hoops dictated by our government, yet they don't give us what we need when we do so.

Therefore, on behalf of myself, small businesses throughout the country and our vendors, we will ask again for your help in keeping this issue alive. Help us get our workers back so we can continue to offer our services.

Our voices are our senators and congressman, and they're not listening. Why?

Christine Buck
Cleveland, Mo.