

November 28, 2007

## Question #1293: What will you do to keep guest workers coming into the US?

Posted: 08:23 PM ET



Jack Brooks from Cambridge, Massachusetts

(CNN) — Jack Brooks from Cambridge, Massachusetts **asks**: Hammered by competition with imports, our family-owned business struggles each year to find seasonal workers. We've been working with the seasonal guest-worker program, the H2B program, bringing in and sending home workers every year. What are you going to do to keep these guest workers coming to the US to save our business?

What did you think about the candidates' response to the question? What would you have asked? Add your comment below, or better yet, turn on your camera to record your commentary and reaction video and send in **your I-Report**. Your comments below or you I-Report video could be part of CNN's post-debate coverage.

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**AmericanRevolution**

November 28th, 2007 8:27 pm ET

These questions are as scripted and pre-screened as ever! It's obvious that the powers that be will not allow ANY real debate of the issues.

The American political process is a joke. Why doesn't the elite just tell us who they have chosen to run the country for the next four years and save us some time.

**Nicholas Clements, Silver**

November 29th, 2007 9:53 am ET

**Spring, MD**

My family-owned landscaping company has used the H2B seasonal guest worker program since 2000. The program helps to fill my company's need for seasonal workers that I cannot find in the USA. Without this program my company would have to curtail operations or even shut down. At the end of each season my workers return to their home country. In all the years that I have used the program not one has failed to return home. This is exactly the kind of program that is needed because IT WORKS! Currently we are attempting to make the voices of small businesses across America heard in the halls of Congress so as to get H2B legislation passed. Otherwise these businesses will struggle to operate in 2008.

**Faith Small, Tabor City  
North Carolina**

November 29th, 2007 9:54 am ET

The H2B program is vital to the survival of American small businesses yet congress has done nothing to help resolve the issues this program is now facing. Do congress and the president not care that American family owned and small businesses are being forced to close their doors? What are you doing to solve the H2B program crisis?

**M Downey**

November 29th, 2007 10:09 am ET

I have a seasonal resort on Cape Cod that has had major difficulties in obtaining American citizens to do unskilled labor such as cleaning toilets, mowing lawns etc. We have been taking advantage of the Guest Worker program for the past fifteen years to help supplement our 4-6 month seasonal employment needs during peak demands. (This is not a program that replaces year round positions nor allows for workers to be here longer than 9 months.) If the guest worker program is not approved shortly we will have to shorten our season or close due to the non-existent labor pool in our area for manual labor positions.

The republican response shows lack of understanding in the whole process. Guest Workers CANNOT BE Approved unless we can prove annually that there are no Americans available to fill the positions. Wage minimums - prevailing wage as it is called - are set by the federal government in the application process to prevent employers from taking advantage of offering lower wages to Americans or Foreign workers.

If the republicans think that an unemployed bread winner in Detroit is going to leave his or her family (or move them) to Cape Cod for six months to do manual labor and then go home or unemployment) for the other six months they are not living in reality that the rest of us are in.

If we do survive this coming year without a guest worker program it won't be from hiring Americans to fill the positions because there aren't any. The jobs will go to j1-visas of foreign students that can be in the country for 3-4 months to work. Wait till the public gets a load of the quality of labor that will come when we trade the guest worker for a college student to clean your hotel room!

**Luke Slottow, Dillon  
Colorado**

November 29th, 2007 10:10 am ET

I agree with Jack. The H2B guest worker program is very important to many industries. In the Colorado mountains it is very hard to get the housekeepers needed for the winter ski season. The H2B guest worker program helps us meet the need and provide the service our guests desire. The workers are hard working and leave the country at the end of their visa. This year the program has been substantially cut back and there are no american workers stepping up to fill these jobs.

**Sam, Mackinac Island**

November 29th, 2007 10:28 am ET

## **Michigan**

Unfortunately Congressman Tancredo is uneducated in his remarks to the H2B question that was posed by Jack Brooks. It is disrespectful to the small family, seasonal business owners throughout the country that he would even comment on a question he so poorly understands. One would hope he would spend some time on the campaign trail; learning about the individual issues facing small businesses and not just push a general immigration stance. We utilize the H2B program and pay very good wages to all of our workers domestic and foreign. With a city population of 500 residents and a required seasonal workforce of 3000+ wages are not what keeps people from our jobs. I would have liked the 1st question asked to the Congressman to be if he could define the difference between the P1 and the H2B programs. This would have shown his lack of understanding on the varying visas programs and not allow him to further the miss-information about the program on national television. If you do not want to understand the many programs available, please understand that the H2B program is vital to the continuation of our small family business and to the many american citizens and college students that we provide employment ever summer.

## **M. H. Colorado**

November 29th, 2007 10:34 am ET

The H2B program is a vital part of our industry. We are in the Hospitality feild, and retaining full time and year round employees is only possible because of this program. With out this program we run the risk of a lower level of service during peak times.

## **Stephen Marshall, Branson Missouri**

November 29th, 2007 10:36 am ET

It was very obvious that the Senator who attempted and I mean attempted, to answer the question obviously had no idea what the H-2B and H-2R work visa work program is all about.

Many of our politicians keep thinking that the H-2B progarm is an Immigration program, when it is not. Somebody needs to let them know how it works and all the people on this program enter the USA legally as temporary workers pay taxes like all of us including Social Security taxes which they will never be able to benefit from because they go back to their country of residence each year and then have to start the process all over again if they want to come back the following year on the same work permit program.

As for the statement that the Senator made that no American is not willing to do the jobs that the H-2B worker is doing, is so far from the truth. If they were, we would not need an H-2B program neither would there be over 12 million illegal immigrants in our country for there would be no jobs for them to have.

## **Annie Kastl Phoenix Arizona**

November 29th, 2007 12:03 pm ET

We own a seasonal amusement company in Arizona. Without the H2-B program there is a possiblity that our company could close. We have a extremely hard time finding seasonal workers in the US that want to travel for 6-8 months out of the year. I am sure that there are MANY small business's that will be affected by this.

## **Deborah Cole, Austin, Texas**

November 29th, 2007 1:47 pm ET

I have used the H2B program for the past 8 years in order to provide a legal workforce for my customers (landscape business). Without this program, we cannot continue to be in business. Our current revenue in the Central Texas market is \$5,000,000 per year. 90% of our workforce comes from this seasonal

H2B program. These workers are paid ABOVE the average wage for our area, receive health benefits, retirement benefits, paid holidays and vacation and are the backbone of our business. Without them we will close our doors. I think it is shortsighted to ignore the value of such a program and the value of the Save Our Small Business Act.

**Veronica Strickland,**  
**Miami, FL**

November 29th, 2007 1:55 pm ET

The H2-B Visa Program is a NON-immigrant program that allows for a legal pathway for employers who wish to hire individuals who have a legal right to work in the US on a seasonal, peak load, or one time occurrence need. It is the only option for employers and employees who are law abiding. The program has built in protections that requires US Employers to receive certification from the Department of Labor, USCIS, and the US Embassy of the foreign country of interest. It protects the rights of the American Workforce and of the Foreign National and does not adversely affect the workforce or the workplace.

This program suffered major setbacks when our elected officials failed to enact legislation that would enable Small Business throughout the US to actively compete in a world economy. The returning worker exemption ended on mid-night September 30th. We now have an urgent crises at hand. This will have a significant impact on all Small Business who utilize the only legal resource currently available to bring in foreign nationals who have the legal work authorization to work in the US for seasonal and peak load needs. Without the returning worker exemption, many US workers will ultimately run the risk of losing their jobs and many small business will be forced out of business because of critical labor needs not being met.

No one disagrees that we need major Immigration Reform. The H2-B program is a Non-Immigrant Program, but can serve as a role model in achieving true reform. All participants pay taxes, many have options for affordable housing, insurance, retirement plans, etc, they live by the rules, and they chose to participate in a program that is a legal. Why punish those who are more than willing to obey the laws of our great country?

We need elected officials who understand that it is the right thing to do — Save Small Businesses and those that depend on our Small Businesses for their livelihoods. Pass legislation that makes it possible to live and participate in a free worldwide enterprising economy.

**Lou Wood, Breese IL**

November 29th, 2007 2:26 pm ET

Our small landscape business depends on the H2B program for labor. We have a small year-round staff and depend on seasonal labor for 8-9 months a year to provide gardening services. We pay above the "prevailing" wage, which is well over the minimum wage. Yet, we cannot fill our workforce with local US citizens. We learned after starting our business 12 years ago that it is not "sexy" or "cool" to care for plants. Although we recruit constantly, we cannot fill our labor needs without the H2B visa program. We have a good business, which provides the livelihood for several families year-round. We pump money into the local economy with purchases of vehicles, equipment and nursery stock. We face losing our business or cutting back our client base if the H2R extension is not renewed this year.

**Krysta, Breckenridge**  
**Colorado**

November 29th, 2007 2:29 pm ET

The H2B program is a vital part of our industry. We are in the Hospitality field, and retaining full time and year round employees is only possible because of this program. With out this program we run the risk of

a lower level of service during peak times. The H2B program is essential to our resort as we have a lack of people willing and able to perform the multiple jobs that make the resort operate. Such jobs include maintenance technicians, housekeepers, dishwashers, laundry assistants, ect. Without the H2B program our resort cannot provide exceptional service or meet the needs of our guests when the resort is full.

**Hi Mtngal**

November 29th, 2007 2:54 pm ET

CNN's GOP debate was a joke last night and was produced by the DNC. How on earth can CNN be credible - it is now the laughing stock of the networks.

Tancredo answer was right on target. As for the employer of this ridiculous question, why doesn't he hire Americans and pay them the deserved wage?

**Lee Thomas Branson, MO**

November 29th, 2007 2:56 pm ET

The state of Oklahoma recently cracked down on employers that were using illegal immigrants, and it must be working. Home construction is now running 3 to 4 months behind schedule due to a lack of workers. Where are these local workers that had supposedly been displaced by these illegals? Not there, even though these jobs are paying \$14.00 to \$16.00 per hour. Could it be that there are actually jobs that pay that well, but that US workers don't want to do that type of work? I wonder if H2-B workers would take these jobs?

Oh, yeah, I forgot, our government won't let them in any more. Sorry, Oklahoma. Looks like your economy doesn't matter to the boys on "The Hill".

This story appeared on Fox News today at 1:30 PM CST.

**R, West Yellowstone, MT**

November 29th, 2007 3:04 pm ET

Congressman Tancredo showed the high level of ignorance that he and many others in Congress (both parties) have about the guest worker program. These H2B Visa employees are classified as non-immigrants, they are vetted by the Federal Government before coming to the U.S., and, when they are no longer needed (seasonal work, mostly) they return home. In many small towns, there are not enough Americans to fill the positions at hotels, restaurants etc.. A lot of businesses have increased the wage they pay and still cannot get enough Americans to apply due to population restrictions, but Congress doesn't care because they only see the major metropolitan areas. If the Republican Party was truly the friend of small business (as both parties falsely claim) then Congressman Tancredo would have been able to differentiate between an immigration issue (which this is NOT) and a small business issue and would be more interested in helping businesses with tax policy, human resources law etc.. rather than spouting his paranoid fears about "Mexicans". Unfortunately, using one's brain rather than one's mouth is not the norm in Washington D.C.

**Thomas "Creampuff"  
Willems, Marcus, Iowa**

November 29th, 2007 4:18 pm ET

Tom Tancredo is the most credible candidate because he knows that the H2-B Visa program is a sham and doesn't need to be a part of our society. 14 - 16/ dollars/hour isn't much when a person has to pay high fuel costs and mortgages that are over-priced due to illegal charges being added. If the companies would pay a "real" living wage, say 20 - 25 dollars/hour, people would actually go out and get those jobs. Do you think the UAW would work for 14 - 16 dollars/hour? Not a chance. They want a "real" living wage as does every worker in America. But, the Illegal aliens are making sure that doesn't happen when they

INVADE our Nation and take jobs for those low wages. Even security guards in Las Vegas make 20+ dollars/hour and have to do less than a house builder. I know people that left Iowa to go get those much higher paying jobs. So, when the family businesses start paying a "real" living wage, so that a person's family can live and flourish, people will take those jobs. And, if we get rid of the Illegal aliens, people will be offered higher paying jobs.

**David M. Ellis Barnesville  
GA 30204**

November 29th, 2007 5:09 pm ET

Renewable Forestry Service, Inc. <http://www.renewforest.com> was the 1st company to get H2B approval for Forest Conservation Workers in 1995/96 to plant trees. The H2B program went from a few thousand visas per year to now 66,000 being issued in days if they were all available at once. H2B workers are the driving force of our company allowing us to hire Americas. No H2B workers we have no core income to hire Americas with. It is that simple. Lou Dobbs and CNN have a real disconnect on this FACT!

**Scott Jones**

November 29th, 2007 5:09 pm ET

Anyone who thinks that the H-2B program displaces American workers needs to do some research. This program was created to ensure that doesn't happen. The jobs are advertised in the newspaper as well as at local unemployment offices. All those interested are encouraged to apply by the employer. I know for a fact that the majority of employers hire all Americans who are interested, there just aren't that many who apply. The wages can't be blamed because they are determined by the Department of Labor and in most cases the employers pay more than that. The fact is that people do not want seasonal jobs, they want full-time jobs. That is why there is a need for the H-2B program. There are thousands of businesses that have a seasonal nature and they need these workers. If something is not done soon the H-2B program will end and those business will be forced to shut down and in turn you will have all of those people unemployed. This is a serious issue that I don't feel our elected officials think will affect them, but it will very shortly.

**Kyle Freeman, Bay City,  
TX**

November 29th, 2007 5:13 pm ET

The H-2B returning worker legislation is something that employers have been relying on for years now. This program is helping employers to legally hire immigrant labor. Returning worker legislation is needed immediately to allow this program to continue to be workable.

**J Zaborski East Hampton,  
Newy York**

November 29th, 2007 5:22 pm ET

The H2B program is vital to our small business, we operate 10 resprts and 7 residential co-op and condominium communities on easteren Long Island. Our facilities are owned by about 800 individuals, we employ about 50 people year round, and about 200 seasonally, of which 60 are engaged throught the H2B visa program. Many of these folks have been working for us 8 to 12 years, returning to their hime country at the end of each season. Extension of this program, enabling the return of these personnel, is vital to the operation of our business. Any reduction in the services that these people provide will result in a loss of customer base which will impact not only our business and the people who rely directly on our suces to support themselves and their families but also the owners of the individual units 600 of whom count on our ability to rent their units to help pay their mortgage or ease them in their retirement. Not to mention the owners and staff of the restuarants, attractions, and retail shops our custoimers support. I can't say enough about the importance of this program. I can only hope our congressional

leaders will recognize it's value in time to assure its extension.

**Kim Leggett, Richmond,  
TX**

November 29th, 2007 5:37 pm ET

Our returning worker are the bread and butter of the industry! With the returning workings being included in the cap it's making a big impact on when my season starts!

**C.T. Stillwater, OK**

November 29th, 2007 5:41 pm ET

My small landscaping business has utilized the H-2B program for ten years. Without it, we would have to close our doors.

The H-2B program is the only practical avenue for legally bringing unskilled, non agriculture workers into the U.S. for short term and seasonal jobs.

Companies that utilize the H-2B program must work through four entirely separate government agencies to get certified for the program.

Under close supervision by the U.S. Department of Labor, The employers must first hire any and all willing U.S. workers by placing newspaper advertisements as well as recruiting through the state employment agencies.

The wages are set by the Government NOT by the employer.

The entire process takes four to five months and must be repeated every single year.

Employers would not go to all this trouble if indeed there were American workers to fill these jobs.

Paying higher wages may attract more American workers to these jobs, but an employer can only pay so much before he has priced himself out of the market.

**Lawrence Labriola  
Scarsdale, NY**

November 29th, 2007 6:17 pm ET

The H2b immigration program is the only legal means to provide seasonal workers for my landscape business. Yet the politicians lump this issue into their "immigration problem" and we get a form letter back on how we are going to fix our borders and immigration issue. Lately Homeland security steps up the enforcement, while presently there are three options, stay in business with illegal workers, remove the 66,000 cap for the H2b program or go out of business. Simply this program allows workers to come across the border work and return with a work visa, they typically come by bus or airplane, thus no need to walk through the desert or climb any fences.

**Bobbie Wyrick -  
Blountstown, FL**

November 29th, 2007 6:22 pm ET

I believe it would be poetic justice if our elected officials would all be required to convene at one central location, preferably a large resort/  
convention hall for a specified number of days. Without the desperately needed H2B workers to clean, pick up garbage, cook, bus tables, provide fresh linens, etc., I think it would not take many days for our esteemed Legislators to recognize that guest workers are a decided necessity for all industries - not just small businesses. Most Americans are unwilling to perform menial jobs or labor, regardless of wages offered. With the current financial crises Americans are facing today, the lack of legal guest workers can

only add chaos to crises.

**Chad @ CFC Fences &  
Decks Provo, UT**

November 29th, 2007 6:29 pm ET

In the past 10 years it has been nearly impossible to hire and keep domestic labor for the type of construction projects we build. This past year we were able to take advantage of the H2b Visa program. The "Legal!" foreign workers that we were happy to sponsor were more reliable, harder working, and after just a few weeks as capable as any experienced domestic fence installer. Our biggest limiting factor to growth as a company is labor, without H2B visa workers our company is not able to meet demand, is forced to charge a higher price, and will likely go out of business.

**Brian C. Reading, PA**

November 29th, 2007 6:32 pm ET

My seasonal landscape company needs the H2b program because we can not find the workers to fill the "March to December" positions. If we are no longer able to hire these "guest" workers, our AMERICAN Foremen and Supervisors' jobs will be in jeopardy. As a result, our vendors will not have our business and a domino effect will follow. If one thinks the economy is struggling now, wait until the hundreds of thousands of workers are not available to the thousands of companies that depend on them.

**Jon Klement McAllen  
Texas**

November 29th, 2007 6:50 pm ET

I live 10 miles from the Texas/Mexico Border. I would have a hard time operating my landscape business without the seasonal worker (H2B) program. I have to compete with many other businesses that hire illegal labor for their seasonal or full time staffing. If the federal government does not enforce the laws on the books, they should at least provide a legal means for businesses that want to follow the law. The H2B program is good for businesses and the public. Getting rid of the program will only create a larger need for illegal workers. Placing a Fence on the Border will not help either.

**bill devine, hilton head  
island SC**

November 29th, 2007 7:14 pm ET

i agree with M Downey's comments. Mr. Tancredo's comments on H2B last night were totally off the mark. The H2b program is the definition of all that can go right with foreign workers. It spreads american spirit and work ethic. It builds bonds with other countries. It helps their economy with US dollars. the workers buy goods here and bring home. They are SEASONAL workers who must return home (and prove they have a reason to return-property, children, family)they return annually and earn promotions. They do not jump in line in immigration. we advertise every year (i'm on an island off the coast of s.Carolina) no one wants a 5-6 month job. They are not here illegally. They are doing the jobs that Americans are beginning to believe they shouldn't have to do anymore, and doing it happily. If we doubled the pay rates like Rep Tancredo suggests, we'd have to charge 300\$ a night for a hotel room!!IF we lose H2B's we will literally stop making a profit. ask mr Tancredo what that does to the tax base.

**Todd Callewaert,  
Mackinac Island MI**

November 29th, 2007 8:13 pm ET

The H2B visa worker is essential to our family business. In northern Michigan there is simply not a labor pool to draw from and we have to rely on these guest workers. We have been using this program for the past 15 years and it has helped us grow tourism in the state. We need to continue to have access to these workers to supplement our work force without them I doubt that we will stay in business.

You have to remember that this program has been running very well for the past 25 years. I do not see why we would want to end this program, it will end up hurting everyone involved, the state tax revenues will suffer, the tourist will suffer from diminished service, the employer will lose needed revenue to keep their operations open, and finally the worker will not be able to support their family.

The H2B program works, please let it continue.

Todd V. Callewaert, Island House Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan

**Vic Barrett, Pigeon Forge,  
Tennessee**

November 29th, 2007 9:13 pm ET

I am in the amusement industry in three southeastern states. We simply cannot find enough willing American employees to staff our parks during our prime season. We rely on the H2B guest worker program to open our doors and keep our business running. All H2B visa holders enter our country LEGALLY and, under the program, return to their home country at the end of their seasonal work period.

We provide a great service to our guests and provide many full-time jobs with great benefits to American citizens. Without the H2B Seasonal Worker Program, these services and American jobs would be at risk since we could not operate our business.

Congress needs to act quickly and pass the legislation extending the returning worker exemption in order to save small businesses like ours.

**Jerry Branson MO**

November 29th, 2007 9:16 pm ET

I manage a motel in Branson MO. We desperately need the H2B workers to keep our motel open. There are less than 7000 residents in Branson, but 18000 motel/hotel rooms and 6000 rental condos. We will be unable to give our guests a pleasant stay without the H2B seasonal workers help. Without them I do not think we can survive because of the worker shortage in Branson. Anyone reading this want a job, please move to Branson. There are more open jobs than people here. Our political leaders need to understand that we do not use H2B workers to save money, we use H2B workers out of necessity

**Jeffrey Lewis Cape Cod  
Ma.**

November 29th, 2007 9:39 pm ET

I have a seasonal restaurant on Cape Cod, an area where it is impossible to find people that will work for six months during the peak season. I have used the H2b visa program for the past eight years, I do not see how my business will ever be able to survive with out this program.

I would like someone to please tell me why Congress is having such a problem passing the H2R visa program when it is the only legal means to which we have for saving our businesses.

**Keavy Franzoni Brick NJ**

November 30th, 2007 7:57 am ET

My company has been a participant in the H2B program for 7 years, without my helpers from Mexico my company would be closed. It is crucial to my survival that the exemption for returning workers is passed. It is the best way to have legal workers. The men love the opportunity to go home each year and see their families. They have no desire to become American citizens. They are making about 20 to 25 k a year. If they lived in the US this would not be enough to support their families. This money goes a long way in their home country and they are very happy to be a part of the program. If they released the cap all

together they could send all illegal landscapers and other seasonal employees back to their home country and have them come via visa. This could actually help the economy greatly encouraging more air travel, bus lines and other forms of transportation instead of the illegal coyote making all the money bring people across the border illegally.

Please encourage Congress and the Senate to pass the bill to extend the H2B returning worker exemption. Thank you Keavy Franzoni Atlantic Plants Brick, NJ

**A Clements, Gaithersburg  
MD**

November 30th, 2007 8:31 am ET

My business depends on the H2B program to bring in legal, seasonal workers. Our congress and government, which benefits from our business and personal tax dollars, is now dragging their feet to renew this program. Without it my business will have to downsize reducing the tax dollars provided to help run the government and pay the salaries of those same lawmakers that are not helping to support business' across the country. Shameful. This legislation must be passed NOW.

**Kathy Mattson, Troy,  
Idaho**

November 30th, 2007 9:43 am ET

I have worked in forestry in the Northwest for many years and can personally testify that, sad as it sounds, Americans will NOT plant trees, or do most any of the other physically demanding jobs that are critically important to the forest products industry. I have watched as our contractors advertise and try to recruit Americans to do this work and despite their continual efforts, Americans either won't apply, or don't ever stay on the job beyond a day or two. H2B workers demonstrate a work ethic apparently missing in young Americans today. The extension of this program is critically important to maintaining both forest health and economic viability of the industry.

**C. Morris, Gainesville, GA**

November 30th, 2007 10:07 am ET

I own a small landscape business. Our work is seasonal and we need additional workers during our busy season. Rarely do Americans apply for these seasonal jobs. In 2001, after numerous experiences with applicants attempting to pass fraudulent documentation I decided to be sure my workforce was legal. I started participating in the H2B guest worker program. It is important to me for my country, family, clients, and staff that I know the true identity of the people I employ.

The jobs these guest workers fill do not take jobs away from Americans. I advertise locally for seasonal workers with little or sometimes no response. I hire Americans during these solicitations but there has never been enough to fulfill our needs. If there were enough American workers there would be no reason for me to incur the great expense to fulfill the requirements dictated by our government to participate in the H2B program. The H2B workers are fingerprinted and thoroughly screened by the US Consulate each year. They work and spend money here during our busy season and return to their families in Mexico when we don't have work during the winter. These workers are vital to our survival. My American employees and I depend on these temporary workers for our jobs. Without the H2B program my business will suffer or have to close.

Congress and the American people need to support the H2B program. Businesses that utilize H2B are committed to only employing Americans and people that are in the USA legally.

**Vargas Property Services,**

November 30th, 2007 10:41 am ET

**Inc., Broomfield, CO**

It is extremely important for our company to have the H2-B workers as no one else wants to work in the landscaping business. If we do not have H2-B workers, our company would no longer exist. We are trying to comply to all the legal requirements, but with all the negative input from the politicians. We have used the H2-B program for 5 years and even though it is a very detailed, tedious process, it is definitely rewarding for us and the workers. Last year we did not get

**Casey L. Draughn, Destin, Florida**

November 30th, 2007 11:03 am ET

2007 was the 8th year Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort has used this Non-immigrant guest worker program. We live in the county and next to the counties with the lowest unemployment rate in all of Florida. We follow the guidelines and rules. We advertise and post for over 300 positions filled by H2B workers. Still, no USA workers respond. We have no other choice or option, we need these guest workers or our business and local economy will be devastated.

Please do not punish those that follow the rules. Please do something to save our small businesses.

**John Costello Grayslake, IL**

November 30th, 2007 3:44 pm ET

In the highly competitive Chicagoland Market we have been leaders in the landscape service industry setting the example to use qualified legal labor. The H2B program has enabled us to stay competitive and allow our clients quality service at affordable rates. The cost of retooling our labor force would be substantial and need to be passed on to share the burden. This would adversely affect thousands of hardworking clients on a tight budget.

**Bruce Bennett**

November 30th, 2007 4:22 pm ET

We've been working with the seasonal guest-worker program as well, the H2B program, bringing in and sending home workers every year. I support any effort to keep these guest workers coming to the US to save our business?

**Donna Frost, Colorado Springs, CO**

November 30th, 2007 5:28 pm ET

We have utilized the H2B program for 8 years for our seasonal needs. It would be helpful to be able to participate in this program in the future. We struggled without the workers in the Spring of 2007 until we were able to bring them here in the early summer.

**Cindy Marin County - California**

November 30th, 2007 9:18 pm ET

US Employers spend thousands of dollars every year to recruit American workers to fill their seasonal jobs. After recruiting trips to high schools and colleges and mass amounts of money spent on advertising, the US Employer is now seeking assistance elsewhere. Some of the jobs are successfully filled with college and high school students, however these employees have to leave early to return back to school. This often leaves the US employer stranded, as they still have a commitment to the tourism industry to keep their Resorts and National Parks open. International workers are paid prevailing wages, are carefully screened, drug tested, and have a thorough criminal background checks done before they are ever granted a visa into the USA. They arrive to fill a seasonal need only after the US Employer spends thousands of dollars advertising and proving to the SWA, DOL and INS they have not been able to successfully hire American workers to fulfill their needs. These are jobs Americans do not want or do

not live close enough to for it to be realistic as a seasonal job offer. If we do not find a way to keep the H-2B program viable for our US Employers they will have no choice but to seek other measures to staff their business or be forced to close their doors to the tourism industry. Many food plants are moving to other countries as a result of not having workers. The tourist industry in the USA has boomed over the last few years and it would be criminal for us to not find a way to help our US employers staff legal documented workers for a short period of time during their peak season.

**Amy Kroloff, Rockville,  
Maryland**

November 30th, 2007 9:39 pm ET

If we do not have an H2B program our company will not survive. You will not be able to bring your children to your local community pool during the summer. It will be closed. We have tried to find enough domestic staff to fill our positions but we can not. Without the H2B program we will not be able to open swimming pools during the summer. Our H2B workers are vital to our operation. They have always followed the law and gone home. Why should they be penalized? This is not an immigration issue, this is a small and seasonal business issue!

**Steven Moskwa**

November 30th, 2007 9:44 pm ET

I would like to point out that the H2B worker program is a LEGAL seasonal worker program and further is a non-professional and non-agricultural job program.

I would also like to point out that H2B workers should not be confused with the illegal worker issue or the illegals that end run the immigration process and attempt to stay in this country, these H2B workers return to their homeland at the end of their work term.

Congress passed the enabling legislation over 20 years ago to support the needs of seasonal small businesses. The initial number of workers in the program was 66,000 and that equates to 1,300 workers per state, if divided out equally.

The H2B workers go through an in-depth screening process to be in the program. While employed in this country they pay state, federal and social security taxes and help enable many small businesses to find short-term employees (read 6 months) that allow their respective businesses to survive.

We, the many small businesses of this country that use this program and adhere to the LAW need the support of CONGRESS and the BUSH ADMINISTRATION on this issue.

All of us that employ H2B workers, must post our jobs following federal guidelines, such as for dishwashers or maids for an American worker to fill before these positions can be filled by H2B workers.

What is not easily understood is that many of these jobs are of a reoccurring seasonal nature in a setting where there are not enough local workers living in the area to fill such jobs, nor can we find urban workers willing to relocate seasonally to fill these jobs. Our need is very real.

Again we that employ H2B workers are following the legal guidelines of this country. We do not break the law and hire illegals. We are asking for and need the support of this Congress!

**John Gentry, Nashville,  
TN**

November 30th, 2007 10:38 pm ET

The seasonal H2B guest-worker program is a vital source of seasonal labor for many companies. The

program demonstrates success year after year in that H visa workers fill seasonal labor shortages in the US and then return to their home countries. Without this program, thousands of businesses in many industries will be unable to provide satisfactory service to their clientele. This program works for America.

**Nicholas C., Silver Spring,  
MD**

December 1st, 2007 5:29 am ET

Landscaping is a physically demanding job that few Americans are willing to take on whether it be at \$10/hour or \$20/hour. The H2B program helps to fill this need. To suggest that companies raise the pay to \$20/hour is absurd. This would do more harm than good. The cost would only be passed onto the property management firms, the hotel and lodging industry, the individual homeowner. That in turn would raise rents, the cost of a hotel room, the annual cost of running a household. It's pure IGNORANCE for anyone to suggest that raising wages is the cure. It is NOT!

**Frank Mariani Lake Forest  
IL**

December 1st, 2007 10:06 am ET

Our landscape company which is based in Northern IL. depends on the H2B guest worker plan to fill some of our labor needs. We employ over 340 every season and do so legally because we have this vital program. I knew the American public was in the dark regarding immigration but the politicians are either clueless or simply pandering for votes and telling everyone what they think we want to hear.

We try to hire Americans at a very reasonable pay rate with many benefits but unless we have H2B we cannot fill the positions.

Politicians be careful because when you do nothing to fix this problem and the folks that voted you into office are paying 10 dollars for a Big Mac 40 dollars for a car wash 300 for the room at Holiday Inn there will be a price to pay for not dealing with this issue.

**Andy Schallmoser, Lake  
Bluff, Illinois**

December 1st, 2007 10:39 am ET

The H2B program represents a vital, need part of the employment picture in the United States. It represents an example of a program that WORKS and could be utilized as an in-road to potential citizenship for people who want the opportunity to work in the United States that they cannot get in their own countries.

My company has utilized the H2B program for more than 5 years and we know that we are employing legal, able bodied people who want employment through legal means, for jobs which American citizens do not want (either out of potential laziness, ego, or the ability to choose to go on taxpayer supported welfare programs rather than these jobs and contribute to the American economy) to do but are a necessary part for the economy and prosperity of the country.

The H2B program requires that the jobs provided to workers under the foreign visa program be advertised/ offered to American citizens FIRST as part of application process for such workers.

It is interesting to note that there are people (politicians and others) who say that the jobs filled through this program are jobs taken away from American citizens.

If these people took the time and effort to read through the program and actually apply for and utilize the

program, these same people would see that some American citizens would rather choose unemployment (and participation in taxpayer supported welfare programs) over employment in these programs.

What is ironic about this last point is that for the jobs filled under the H2B program, these individuals are legally in the United States under a work visa and are paying taxes into the American tax system via income, payroll taxes, employment taxes, etc. and actually paying for some of the programs other able-bodied American citizens are being supported by!

I hope the American people and government will wake up and smell the coffee, because the H2B program is a governmental program that ACTUALLY WORKS WELL and are at a point of either continuing to choose to either freeze, stop or attack a program that is good for the country, good for the economy, good for the tax rolls, good if used as a potential way to earn citizenship, and at the same time ensures that American citizens have the FIRST opportunity to fill those positions before such jobs are filled self motivated, hard-working people whose primary dream is to find work so that they can provide for their families and improve their lives, because they don't have that opportunity in their own countries.

**Jill Burson, Chicago, IL**

December 1st, 2007 12:10 pm ET

The H-2B program and our legislative relief are VITAL to our business. Our ability to retain full-time workers year around is dependent on this program and must be continued.

**Don Oesch Woodridge  
Illinois**

December 1st, 2007 12:17 pm ET

I cannot stress how crucial this issue is to my book of business. I have relied on the H2B program for my success. At this point, replacing men who I have work with for 6+ years is catastrophic. They all should be citizens by now, all family men, all hard works. When H2B came unglued a few years back it was a disaster, having well trained men showing up to the party 2 months late hurt. I lost business then, please don't let it happen again.

**D.J. Vander Slik, Grand  
Rapids, Mi**

December 1st, 2007 2:18 pm ET

Our company has been working with H2B Visa Team Members for 4 years now. We started with 4 people and this season had 23 people through the H2B and H2R Visas.

We have tried for many years to hire college, high school students, and American Citizens to perform the many landscape services we provide. American Citizens will not do the work. We have paid more, offered incentives, bonuses, more health care, Paid Time Off etc... Nothing, our American Citizens feel that they are too good to work seasonal jobs outdoors.

If we lose 23 people our company is going to really struggle. We will not close but our administrative staff will be cut because they will not have team members to supervise.

This has gone on too long we need the extension now and we need a longer term extension for the future of our small businesses.

**Jen Quandt, Downers**

December 1st, 2007 2:57 pm ET

**Grove IL**

I have worked in the Green Industry much of my life. The H2B workers are vital to this industry. They are trained and skilled workers many of whom return to the same jobs every year. We need action not words on this issue. I shudder to think of spring in landscape without our crews. Let's not let the issue die a victim of politics.

**Greg Hegarty, Denver, CO**

December 1st, 2007 5:14 pm ET

CNN,

The H2B visa program is an intricate part of my business and has been for over 9 years. As a small business owner, I could not function without this program to support my labor and customer needs. Continuing the 'grandfather' legislation is fundamental to a seamless labor program and minimizing disruption to our operation. I strongly support a legal workforce and immigrants paying taxes and other costs to be employed like other Americans. Without this program I would have to close my company which supports over 1,200 customers and 35 employees throughout the year. Please continue this important legislation.

Regards,

Greg Hegarty

President

LawnTech Enterprise, Inc.

**Brian Birkenstock, Miami, Florida**

December 2nd, 2007 11:22 am ET

The H2-B Program is the only legal option that many seasonal employers have especially in the State of Florida. This State has more than its share of illegals. We as law abiding tax payers pay a huge price tag for this each and every single day — property tax, fuel tax, health and auto insurance, etc.

I admire Jack Brooks. He had the courage to ask the tough questions. He is a recognized leader in his industry and understands the importance of the ability to hire those who have a legal right to work in this country. He also understands that in order to compete in a global economy you must have a willing and able workforce. Why is it so hard to have our elected officials recognize and comprehend? This is not a Republican Issue, or a Democratic Issue, it is not a Immigration Issue — it is a Small Business Issue. Why not give employer's the right to hire foreign nationals the legal way?

**Jennifer Fraser, Los Banos, California**

December 2nd, 2007 2:03 pm ET

I own a Food Concessions business in California and work at fairs and festivals all over the state. Without this program fairs all over the country may close, not to mention state parks like Yosemite who can't find employees who want to work for a job for six months and then be laid off for the rest of the year. You travel and will probably be away from your family with very few days off for that whole season that you work. Sounds like I should have applicants banging on my door for these positions, no of course people don't want these jobs, there are times I don't want my job. These jobs though, are essential to their communities and for the nine people I hire off this program to set up and tear down my business I am able to hire 35 more people to work other jobs at the fair and the fair is able to hire hundred or more people to operate the fair. These workers make your fairs safer by making sure rides are put up and taken down correctly and to strict OSHA and DOSH standard, project a cleaner and safer carnival and concession person image to the public (there is a reason why everyone has a bad image of what some describe as a "carnie" employee) and keep better American jobs available.

**Chad Stern, Chevy Chase,  
MD**

December 2nd, 2007 4:34 pm ET

I run a landscape maintenance company in Maryland and rely upon the H-2B visa program to staff my company with legal seasonal labor.

I am willing to bet that anyone who opposes the H-2B returning worker exemption does not own a business and does not have working knowledge of how vital the program is to small seasonal businesses across the county.

Hundreds of business owners have gone to Capital Hill to convince congress why they should be allowed to continue to staff their companies with legal labor and keep their doors open. It is not fun to have to go to Capital Hill and to argue that I, as a business owner, should be allowed to staff my company with legal labor. If congress does not act quickly, and by quickly I mean by the end of this week, to extend the returning worker exemption for the H-2B program the blood of our companies will be on the hands of our congressional representatives.

**T. Silo, Kiawah Island, SC**

December 2nd, 2007 8:36 pm ET

It is time to become educated about the H2B Program. It is the only LEGAL way for us to fill these seasonal positions that American workers won't do! Best of all is that this is a NON-IMMIGRANT visa!! These workers do not want to move here. They anticipate the end of the season when they get to go home country & spend time with their family.

The biggest shame of this legislation not passing is the fact that so many American workers will be laid off. Whether it is restaurants, shops, etc closing b/c there is not enough staff to stay open OR the far reaching industries, vendors that rely on us to supplement their business b/c of our H2B's (apartment complexes, transportation companies, food vendors, etc).

It amazes me how the candidates want to make this an immigration issue. It shows their ignorance & lack of knowledge on the issue. We all want our borders secure but I also want a President & a Congress who can multi-task & secure borders while also enforcing a temporary worker program that allows small businesses to stay in business.

**bruce hummel**

December 3rd, 2007 7:59 am ET

We use the H2B visa program for our seasonal workers. A good program legal workers with rights.

Sincerely,

Bruce L. Hummel, President  
Bee-Line Sprinkler, Inc.

**Jay Queenstown MD**

December 3rd, 2007 9:35 am ET

The H-2B has been a very successful program for seasonal businesses in rural areas. Seasonal businesses in rural communities do not have the number of people available to do the seasonal work the community often needs to sustain its full time work force. This program has allowed these companies to hire legally people that are nonimmigrants to fulfill this short seasonal need. It does not take american jobs it allows the full time american jobs to survive. The programs should be enlarged because the businesses uses this program are the good businesses that want to hire legally and are willing to take on

the extra expense of the program and must pass 3 reviews by different government agencies to be approved.

**Bill Gordon, Olathe  
Kansas**

December 3rd, 2007 9:36 am ET

Our "presidential" candidates think that regardless of the fact that our US born population is shrinking and our economy is growing, we don't need immigrants, regardless of whether they are legal or not. All we have to do is start paying higher wages to solve the problem. The unfortunate fact is both candidates know better. The truth is they can gain votes by telling voters we can get rid of all the brown skin foreign speaking invaders if we elect them. In reality foreign workers are a vital part of our economic well being, just as they were when our forefathers came to this country. The H2B program is the only legal source available for companies needing seasonal low skilled labor. American workers have other more prestigious non-seasonal options available. Don't let our politicians destroy the only visa program that actually allows employers to legally higher the people they need to keep their seasonal businesses alive.

**Maureen Scheitz,  
Wauconda, IL**

December 3rd, 2007 9:46 am ET

Hiring workers through the H2b program is the only way we can fill our landscape labor postions with individuals who are work authorized. We want to follow the laws and hire only legal workers. We need the help of our legislators to continue to do so.

If an extension of the Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act is not passed, we will not be able to obtain any H2B workers in 2008 given the way the paperwork processing works with the cap split to 33,000 for each half of the fiscal year. Once the cap was hit for the first half of the 2008 fiscal year on September 27, 2007, USCIS returned all applications submitted and not approved. Upon receipt of their returned applications, companies revise their dates of need to April 1, 2008 and resubmit their application to USCIS who prioritizes them on a first come first served basis. Because we cannot submit our labor certification application prior to 120 days before our date of need, we are not able to submit our application to USCIS until roughly January. USCIS will have been receiving applications for 4 months at that time, a month more than it took to hit the cap for applications received in the first half of the fiscal year without the benefit of returning workers being excluded from the cap.

Replacing our 149 H2b workers, 36% of our workforce, will be next to impossible given that our applicant flow is more than 40% undocumented and the remaining applicants are not interested in seasonal positions requiring manual labor. Recently we ran an ad to replace high school and college students who went back to school after working for us during the summer. The results of that candidate search are representative of a typical search for labor in the landscape industry. We had 150 phone calls responding to the ad which resulted in 16 interviews and one (1) hire. The individual we hired worked a few days and disappeared. The typical reason for job abandonment such as this is the work is too hard.

Not being able to replace 149 workers will cause us to drastically reduce the size of our business and eliminate full time year round positions held by U.S. Citizens and permanent residents. 149 workers represent 38 crews and over \$6,000,000 in revenue. Our 24 year old family owned business needs the support of our legislators to stay in business, avoid disaster and support our local economy.

Maureen Scheitz, VP of HR, Acres Group, Wauconda, IL

**Ginny, Post Falls, Idaho**

December 3rd, 2007 11:13 am ET

The government needs to let the programs work, the guest worker programs would eliminate the illegals in the U.S. if the government would allow them to work. The H-2B program is a non-immigrant program; it is not about immigration. The guestworkers do not want to immigrate, because of all the restrictions the government has put on the H-2B non immigrant guest worker program the foreign nationals are coming to the U.S. illegally, because no longer can they come as a non-immigrant and go home, being certain that they continue to return for the employer's next season. The positions that the H-2 guestworkers fill are tested consistently and made readily available for US workers to pursue and attain with higher wages than federal minimum, however, the work ethic that America was founded on has disappeared with our present generation. We have a generation of "give me" but don't make me have to work for it. This is seen with every H-2 application and recruitment of U.S. domestic workers. America has become a lazy society and turned away from a hardworking country. This is why the non-immigrant programs are so desperately needed and without the programs being allowed to work, small business employers are in dire straights and in detrimental danger of losing their business, their livelihood, their US workers will be laid off due to the business closing its doors and America's economy is going to be harmed for many, many years to come.

What the U.S. government needs to do is to let the programs do what they were created to do and to free them to help America's economy and America's overabundance of illegals. Give the H-2B a market based cap and a returning worker exemption. The program is not easy for the small business owner to go through, it is time consuming (at least 4-months), it is restrictive in keeping the employer in total and complete compliance to the labor laws by USDOL, USDOL Wage and Hour, OSHA, US Dept. of Homeland Security, USCIS and the U.S. State Dept. Small business employer's need the program to stay in business, because US workers will not do the work no matter what the wage. This is NOT an immigration issue. This IS a small business employer's ability to stay in business and be an asset to America's economy.

**Cathy Rosborough,  
Gurnee, IL**

December 3rd, 2007 11:52 am ET

These H2B workers are a critical link in our teams in the landscape industry. We depend upon their return each season as they offer a priceless contribution that is extremely difficult to replace by their experience and dependability. This affects not only those of us in the service industries and those of us receiving the services, but also the employees themselves as they depend upon these jobs to support their families.

**mark nash Baltimore, Md**

December 3rd, 2007 12:03 pm ET

I own a small tent rental company in Baltimore MD. We have participated in the H2B program for four years now and it works very well for our company. The confusion that I have is why the elected officials would not address a labor shortage with a legal measure, one that encourages companies such as mine to hire legally rather than shut down and release american workers, or worse potentially hire illegal workers. The idea that I cannot find American workers to do this work because of the wage I am paying is ridiculous. I pay 2 to 3 times what retail and fast food industries pay, and I cannot find a drug free driver to drive my trucks or work consistently in the conditions that the tent rental world demands. If Congress does not address the laor shortage in the USA, work will be done illegally and prices will rise significantly in the service industry. Is this what Congress wants??

**Edward Furner, Lake**

December 3rd, 2007 12:09 pm ET

**Bluff, IL**

H2B Workers are the life force of the Landscape Industry that I am currently a part of. These employees are a valuable resource for our nation's economy. Even with attempts at employing locally we will always rely on our team of H2B employees to do the work that quite frankly the majority of americans are not willing to do. If we continue to limit the amount of H2B workers allowed to work in the US, we better plan on grabbing a shovel and doing the manual labor ourselves to keep the company in business. This same concept would apply to almost all service industries and surely cause the downfall of many great organizations.

**Charles Wiegand Aurora,  
CO**

December 3rd, 2007 1:18 pm ET

The H2B program has been very helpful to our landscape company in the Denver Metro area. We have an estimated 60,000-80,000 illegals here in the metro area. About 75% of our job applicants are illegals. Using the H2B program allows us to use a 100% legal labor force. Our average wage for H2B workers is close to \$12/hour. New Colorado laws are requiring all Colorado employers to verify worker documents. This is putting even more pressure on the legal immigrant worker options since finding local help is very difficult.

**Paul DeVilbiss, Lewes,  
Delaware**

December 3rd, 2007 1:37 pm ET

It is very scary to think that those running for President do not know what the H2B program is all about. They seem to think that visiting workers are illegals or that a fence across the border will help the situation. They seem to think that there are American workers to fill this need. If so, I would like the names and phone numbers. We have participated in the H2B program for six years and now our survival depends on it. Visiting workers are not immigrants, they get no benefits from our government and they must pay their taxes like the rest of us. The US economy is highly dependant on this program and failure to pass legislation to continue the existing program will be a national disaster.

**Jeff Schoenhard, West  
Yellowstone, Montana**

December 3rd, 2007 1:43 pm ET

I find many of our representatives do not understand this program. We would not be able to operate without the H2B program. I operate a hotel in West Yellowstone, MT where the unemployment rate is under 2%. We will advertise positions for months with no response, there are no workers in our area. H2B workers go through a lengthy process to be legal workers paying taxes like everyone else. With so many illegals working in the USA why would we penalize business who bring in workers legally? H2B is not an immigration issue, its a small business issue.

**Michael, Charleston, SC**

December 3rd, 2007 1:55 pm ET

As a recruiting manager at a resort that employs 200-280 H2B visa workers a year, I have spent the past month, specifically, researching how to employ local workers. We ran an ad for hundreds of positions opening up the first of the year and have received 11 responses. For us to continue to provide our customers with the quality of service and level of enjoyment they expect (and that we want to provide), this legislation is the only way. It is not about immigration, it is simply about allowing smaller businesses to run in areas where local skilled workers are not as prevalent. We work diligently throughout the year trying to employ every local worker possible. But still, it simply isn't enough.

**Joyce Brady Alma,**

December 3rd, 2007 3:15 pm ET

## Michigan

We are an amusement company currently traveling Michigan, North Carolina, and Georgia. Our use of H-2B workers has saved our sanity and our business. American workers are hard to find as our business has battled a negative image for years. We pay good wages and due to handling children for a living we drug test regularly. Americans do not want to hire in this case. If we lose our H-2B workers we will be forced to close our doors after 25 years in business. The government got us into this program, but now wants to take it away when it has saved us. We service nationally known events and they would be forced to search out a company not known for quality and with a safety record like ours. I recently attended a convention where I sat in a workshop with an Iowa Senator as the speaker. When I stayed after to speak with him about the H-2B program he said what is that? When I reminded him he vaguely said he understood it, and only then because someone he knew used workers in their construction company. He felt it was facing problems due to the immigration situation the President is trying to bring on the country. But everyone should understand the difference. The workers do not want a claim on our country, work hard, drug test and follow all rules, and in the end of their time return willingly to their own country. We need this program to continue.

## G. Stone, W. Dennis, Mass.

December 3rd, 2007 3:59 pm ET

We run a 5 month seasonal resort, family business and have had the same H2b visa housekeepers and dishwashers for 10 years, except for the year the cap was reached prior to splitting the cap for summer vs winter employers.

They do an excellent job for us, our guests enjoy the diversity, they return each year to their families when the season ends.

The year we got shut out of the program each of those 2 departments, the turnover was about every 2 to 4 weeks, people would get hired then go to find a better job that didn't require making beds, cleaning toilets, and washing dishes. There is no prestige in these jobs, we have taught our children in this country to seek better goals. There is nothing wrong with that, but there is a need to fill basic services. The H2b visa program fills those services at peak demand times or for those of us who demand only allows to be open seasonally. Please understand these are not year round jobs for viable employment, the job ends in October and there aren't winter jobs to take their place, the streets fold up in these remote areas.

## J. Bozard, South Carolina

December 3rd, 2007 5:19 pm ET

It is a shame that our Congress is not more informed on "real" business issues like the H2B Seasonal Guest Worker Program. We as American Employees and Employers depend on this program in order for our American Company to be successful. We cannot staff all of the available positions with our local workforce even though we have tried extensive recruiting throughout the county, state and country. 100 Co-Sponsors have signed onto the 2008 Return Worker Exemption yet no one is moving this legislation!

## Anthony LoBello Lagrange IL

December 3rd, 2007 6:07 pm ET

I have worked in the landscape industry for twenty years and one of the biggest challenges we have always faced is the shortage of labor. Landscape work is seasonal and physically demanding, the local population does not want this work, regardless of wages offered. The H2B program has been the only way we have been able to consistently hire the labor force needed. Raising the pay rate is not the answer keeping a successful guest worker program is!

**Erica Hazelwood Hilton**  
**Head Island, SC**

December 4th, 2007 9:35 am ET

In Hilton Head, our peak months are April through September. The H2B program has proved successful for many years at many resorts. Like other seasonal destinations, it is extremely hard to find permanent year round staff. Without this program, the majority of island businesses, would be in jeopardy. We could not possibly find and employ the needed staff to operate a 340 room resort. Our H2B employees follow all legal guidelines to reside and work in the U.S. These employees return home prior to the expiration of their visa. We hope that the decision to possibly end this program is reconsidered for 2008.

**Mike Sullivan, Alabama**

December 4th, 2007 9:52 am ET

We have used the H2B program for 7 years now and it has been quite successful. We have a seasonal need and this is an ideal legal program to recruit workers. If Congress does not approve the returning worker provision immediately it will put our resort and many other hotels in jeopardy of not being able to provide the level service our guests expect and pay for.

We are not displacing any local workers. Our area's unemployment has ranged from 2.4 -2.7%. I can not find workers for these seasonal positions.

**Maureen Dye,**  
**Warrensburg, NY**

December 4th, 2007 10:13 am ET

The speaker never addressed Mr. Brown's question. While his comments about immigration resonated with some of the audience, the H2B guest worker program is not an immigration issue, it is a business issue.

I work for a stone quarrying business that relies on the H2B program for seasonal laborers. Despite the fact that we work in an economically depressed area of upstate New York and that the pay rate exceeds the minimum wage, we have not been successful at attracting and holding American employees to these jobs.

Without these workers, the demand for our stone will outstrip our ability to quarry, package & deliver it. That in turn threatens the job security of the permanent workforce.

The guest workers we employ are here only for the quarry season. And while they are here, they contribute to our local economy, rather than detracting from it.

This program is critical to employers and employees in the stone, agriculture, landscaping, and hospitality industries & the communities that support them.

**Andrea Richter, Kenosha,**  
**WI**

December 4th, 2007 3:49 pm ET

The H-2B workers are crucial in order for our industry to maintain the ability to perform the services expected and deserved by our clients. Without the H-2B workers the green industry will not be able to perform and function as viable companies, and in the end will put our industry in jeopardy. That, in itself, will trickle down, putting our supportive industries in economic distress as well.

**Creativexteriors, Inc.**  
**Denver, Colorado**

December 4th, 2007 4:25 pm ET

As a seasonal business who uses H2B March through October of each year it is critical that we continue

to be able to access the H2B program that we have used for close to 20 years now. Our company cannot begin to fill the seasonal positions needed to take care clients when we advertise locally and get maybe 1 applicant. Without an extension to the cap that many businesses are pushing for in Colorado, the cap is met each year prior to our company getting certification. We need action on the cap legislation immediatly to save our 2008 season. As one of the 1st companies in Denver to use the H2B program for years, and as a concerned US citizen trying to follow the rules set forth by our government, please set aside the election year politics and help those of us that take the time and expense to save our workforce.

**Jan Thurgood, Phoenix,  
AZ**

December 4th, 2007 5:34 pm ET

"The problem is of such enormous complexity that the facts presented make it exceedingly difficul and virtually impossible to grasp at all the real significance of the situation",(Secretary George Marshall, 1947)

It appears that immigration is a political football without air.

When it comes to visas there is a general lack of understanding of how the various visas work and as a result they are all bundled into one mass. And that mass is being portrayed as a threat to the U.S. The absurd part is that the threat is actually in the form of companies losing their workers and their ability to produce their product. The H-2B program provides accountability to the Dept. of State, DHS, DOL, the sponsoring company, and the workers who enjoy the opportunity to work and contribute in the U.S.A. We desperatley need this program to work and the H-2R extension to be put in place for at least the balance of this fiscal.

**Chuck Bacon,  
Pennington, NJ**

December 10th, 2007 6:10 pm ET

Our landscape company has used the H2B visa program for seasonal workers for the past six or more years. We have been unable to get local U.S. labor to fill the void duing our peak seasonal need in the spring, summer, and fall months. We depend heavily on these workers, pay them the wage the Department of Labor tells us to, and take out the taxes and social security just like any american worker. Without these workers our business would NOT be able to run, and would close its doors putting our full time american workers on the streets looking for work!

At one time I believed small businesses were the back bone of this county. Now I'm begining to think that is no longer true.

I'm asking that Congressmen and Senators alike put politics aside and support "SAVE OUR SMALL AND SEASONAL BUSINESS ACT OF 2007" (S.988, H.R.1843) Please lend your efforts to bring this critical legislation up for vote and support its prompt passage.

**Dan Wanzung, Elmhurst  
Illinois**

December 11th, 2007 6:37 pm ET

The H2B program is the only available source for legal, temporary workers for our landscape company. It is vital to our company's existence and therefore to all of our full time, resident, staff that would not have jobs if there were not the workers to carry out what they design, estimate and supervise! Without a third of our workforce that we depend on yearly, we will be forced to lay off full time employees! It will also mean shutting down or not purchasing new equipment, supplies and the support services of a host of other small & big business that are dependent on us. This program is a successful model for future temporary work programs and should not be pulled into the immigration debate! This is a critical program

for the lively hood of small business, business's that serve the American public!

**Garden State Irrigation  
Inc. Wyckoff New Jersey**

December 13th, 2007 10:33 am ET

garden state irrigation the proven workers should be exempt as they have proven their worth and should not be penalized for following the law.

**Linda Kelley**

January 7th, 2008 3:47 pm ET

The Lakes Region of New Hampshire can not supply the needed seasonal labor force for the upcoming 2008 summer season. With the H2B cap met for April and the Returning Workers Program not reinstated the hospitality industry here will be hard pressed to meet the needs of guests. What can we do now to find the work force to make our businesses viable? We are at our wits end! We employ as many local workers as possible, the H2B Guest Worker Program has been the only way we can find the service workers we need.

**Colon Grandy, Jr.**

January 13th, 2008 2:25 pm ET

Our seasonal retail produce stand has used H2-B labor for 7 years now. I have 9 people from Mexico that have been coming very year, the very same people. They have become like our family. If H.R. 1843 does not pass, we will have no choice but to close, and it will be forever. If we miss a year, it would take years to buid the business back up again. It took 21 years to build this business up, and just like that, down the drain. It's insane to punish the ones that are doing it legally. And now it looks as though Congress will play the fiddle while Rome burns. Colon Grandy, Jr.

**angry fry cook**

January 27th, 2008 4:45 pm ET

To ALL the business owners who are whining about having to close their business curtail operations etc. Let me ask this. If the H2B program didnt exist, would you have opened your business?

If so, or you have been in operation with no problem in the past but now facing difficulty, What has changed to require the importation of workers?

Also, if the H2B is only 66k workers/year and the average employer of them has several, how many businesses would be effected if it didnt exist? 1000-2000?

The "problem" has been created because people have opened more businesses than their local labor markets can supply. So let supply /demand do its thing, Close your freakin business if you cant get employees.,

Im on cape cod. wages have been stagnant for the past 12 years, meanwhile there are more restaurants and shops than ever. The local economy could easily do without 10% of the businesses here. Those that remain would see an increase in their sales and life would go on.

All of you sound like the end of the world would happen if this program cease to exist. Bunch of friggen whiners.

**Michelle**

February 5th, 2008 8:57 pm ET

This program has a humanitarian aspect too. It is beneficial to the countries that the workers come from as they remit much needed foreign exchange to their families back home. It also helps them to develop skills of a higher quality than what is attained in the developing countries that they come from. One of the main reason for illegal immigration is to seek employment, this program helps to minimize the

possibilities of this as workers knowing that their jobs will be available next season will not jepodize their status. It is much better than government aid, a sometimes it does not filter down to the needy. These workers need your help, take then back