

The New York Times

LETTERS

Letter: Worker Shortage

August 2, 2009

To the Editor: Jordan Hruska's moving account in his article "[Down the Eastern Shore](#)" (July 12) of a [Maryland](#) tradition failed to mention that the tradition itself is in grave danger.

Maryland's crab industry relies on a steady supply of foreign workers to stay afloat. These workers fill the part-time, seasonal positions picking meat from crabs, supporting thousands of American jobs in the process. Currently Maryland's crab houses don't have these workers due to a national cap placed on the number of H-2B visas available for seasonal summer employment.

We've introduced legislation to permit a limited number of guest workers from past years to return to certain industries. The bill will exempt returning seasonal workers from counting against the national seasonal cap — and ensure a steady stream of reliable, dedicated workers.

Unfortunately, the bill is caught up in a Congressional logjam. If Congress does not act fast to pass it, the tradition Mr. Hruska so eloquently described — and the American jobs it supports — may become a thing of the past.

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