

The Border Line

An Immigration Blog

Lawmakers push for more seasonal “H-2B” immigrant visas

By [Eunice Moscoso](#) | Wednesday, April 2, 2008, 09:00 AM

GOP lawmakers said Tuesday they would try to force a bill to the House floor to increase seasonal visas for foreign workers.

An array of businesses — including crab farmers, beach resorts, and construction firms — could suffer greatly if Congress fails to increase the temporary visas for low-skilled employees known as H-2B's, the lawmakers said.

Rep. Adam Putnam, R-Fla., said that the hospitality and tourism business as well as the seafood industry could be hurt badly in his state, especially over the busy summer season.

Some businesses in a number of states could be forced to lay off permanent U.S. workers or even close down, lawmakers said.

“They all depend on this labor force to meet peak demand,” said Rep. Charles Boustany, R-La., at a Capitol Hill press conference.

Boustany said that the Congressional Hispanic Caucus is pressuring Democratic leaders to stall the legislation because it is seeking a broader immigration reform.

The caucus supports an increase in H-2B visas as part of a larger package that would include a path to citizenship for current illegal immigrants and create a large temporary worker program for foreigners.