



## Potential Visa Cap Concerns Businesses

### *Many Local Businesses Employ Foreign Or Seasonal Workers*

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**PLATTSBURGH, N.Y.** -- PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. -- Getting into the states -- whether simply to visit or work -- has never been tougher.

After Sept. 11, 2001, keeping terrorists out is a priority, but some of these new restrictions could actually be hurting the United States. Seasonal workers come into our country every year, crossing at Champlain or through immigration at JFK or Tijuana.

Many of them are using the H2B work visa to get in, but the government recently capped the number of those visas that can be given out. Mike Butler says summer wait staff at Howard Johnson's in Lake Placid come from South America and Eastern Europe -- ditto for housekeeping throughout the soon-to-be Comfort Inn Hotel.

They're crucial to hotels and resorts throughout the Champlain Valley, but legislators say restrictions are meant to protect, and not impede, businesses.

In a post-9/11 world, restrictions on unskilled workers like housekeepers could go through. Extensions are one solution.

Managers at the Basin Harbor Club, a resort in Vermont, stood to lose a lot of employees with the H2B visa cap but fixed their shortfall by extending visas of foreigners who were here already.

Whether future restrictions cause the work pool to dry up remains to be seen.