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Indiana Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association



Tell Lawmakers to Reduce Red Tape for Guest Workers, Small Business

News from American Horse Council & National HBPA

As members of Congress return to their home states to visit constituents through Labor Day, the American Horse Council urges members to advocate for legislative solutions to the federal government's beleaguered temporary worker visa program. To fix the regulatory chaos that plagues the H-2B application process, tell your elected officials - whether during a town hall meeting or visit to the local farmers' market - to support the important measures below. In the event you don't see your elected officials this summer, you can contact their D.C. offices at 202-225-3121, where staff members will note your concerns and brief your representatives when they return in the fall.

Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations

For immediate relief, tell lawmakers to support H-2B cap and regulatory flexibility through the Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations process. Congress is considering language in the current spending bill that will force agencies to manage the visa program in an efficient manner for at least one year. With the current fiscal year ending September 30, Congress must address funding immediately after Labor Day. For long-term fixes to the broken system, see the measures below:

Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act of 2017 (S. 792)

- *This bipartisan bill would establish clear guidelines for employers hiring H-2B workers, assuring that U.S. citizens are not displaced in the job market;
- *Provide cap relief by establishing a common sense exemption for well-vetted workers who have already held a visa during the previous three years;
- *And require increased coordination between the Departments of Labor (DHS) and Homeland Security (DHS) to reduce red tape and delays.

Strengthen Employment and Seasonal Opportunities Now Act of 2017 (SEASON) (H.R. 2004)

- *Similar to the Senate bill, this legislation would expand exemptions for workers who have previously been vetted by immigration officials, thereby increasing cap relief.
- *Establish expedited processing of applications to meet labor demands during peak seasons.
- *And exempt temporary visa holders from tax credits otherwise available to full-time U.S. residents, thereby reducing costs to taxpayers.

In mid-January, the government hit the 33,000 visa cap for the first half of the year. In March, the agency met its 33,000 visa allocation for the second half of 2017, leaving many small businesses who rely on seasonal labor without workers for the summer months. Although DHS issued an additional 15,000 visas on July 17, the agency issued those visas on an ad hoc, discretionary basis, undermining common sense business planning. The July decision will also create limited benefits for small businesses relying on summertime help.

For more information on immigration and related legislation and federal actions, please contact Bryan Brendle, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, at 202-296-4031 or bbrendle@horsecouncil.org.

(press release from the American Horse Council)

The National HBPA (www.hbpa.org) based in Lexington, Ky. is the largest racing horsemen's representative organization in North America with 30 affiliate organizations and over 30,000 member horsemen. Big Dee's Tack & Vet Supplies, Lavin Insurance Group LLC, Xpressbet, NTRA Advantage, equineline.com, Red Brand, Finish Line Horse Products Inc. and Horseman Labor Solutions are proud corporate partners of the National HBPA.