

Why the Industry Says Foreign Workers are Good for America



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In his Nov. 8 article, "[House GOP seeks flood of foreign 'guest workers'](#)," WND news editor Leo Hohmann cited criticisms of the federal non-immigrant H-2B worker program as being anti-U.S. jobs and contributing to the expansion of America's current illegal-alien population. Nothing could be further from the truth. People familiar with the H-2B program know that if U.S. policymakers had been committed to making this important non-immigrant work visa program accessible and reliable after it was enacted in the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, America would not now have 15 million illegal aliens living and working here.

Let's look at the reality of the H-2B program. Seasonal industries as diverse as landscaping, hotels/resorts, tree planting companies, construction and food processing rely on the H-2B program to supplement their seasonal workforces when they experience a shortage of legal seasonal workers. H-2B employment is a minimal percentage of the hundreds of thousands of jobs in these industries. In fact, current estimates show that H-2B employment is less than one-tenth of 1 percent of total employment in this country. When an employer makes the commitment to use the H-2B program, it's because he is located in an area where there is a labor deficit—he cannot locate sufficient legal workers to handle the work he has available, not because he prefers 'cheap, easy foreign workers.' The program is neither easy nor cheap.

Why can't employers hire U.S. workers, especially with such a high national unemployment rate? Many companies are located in rural areas or areas with general labor shortages, and our population is aging and unaccustomed to physical labor. The bottom line is that most seasonal jobs are considered undesirable by U.S. workers—hard, hot, outdoor, manual labor. In choosing to source seasonal workers through the H-2B program, an employer makes a strong commitment to abide by U.S. laws prohibiting the employment of illegal aliens. Every H-2B worker comes to the U.S. on a legal 9-month-long work

visa, and he/she can only work for the employer who has been approved by three different federal agencies to employ H-2B workers.

Contrary to claims that some H-2B jobs are “middle class,” Department of Labor statistics do not support this assumption. Over half the annual H-2B jobs (less than 42,000) involve cutting grass and planting shrubs, and another third are tree planters, traveling carnival workers and hotel workers.

Read the rest of this article [here from WND](#).