

# H-2B

# WORKFORCE COALITION

## Protecting American Workers Through a Stable and Reliable Seasonal Workforce

**Brian Crawford, Co-Chair**  
American Hotel &  
Lodging Association

**Laurie Flanagan, Co-Chair**  
AmericanHort  
National Association of Landscape  
Professionals

**Gregg Hartley, Co-Chair**  
Outdoor Amusement Business  
Association

**Steering Committee:**

American Hotel and Lodging Association

American Horse Council

AmericanHort

American Seafood Jobs Alliance

Federation of Employers and Workers of  
America

Forest Resources Association

Golf Course Superintendents Association  
of America

Mackinac Island Convention & Visitors  
Bureau

National Association of Landscape  
Professionals

Outdoor Amusement Business Association

Seasonal Employment Alliance

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

## The H-2B Workforce Coalition Applauds the Introduction of Returning Worker Exception Act of 2021

*Sponsoring Legislators Acknowledged for their Leadership to fix the H-2B Program for Seasonal Businesses Across the Country*

**Washington, DC (June 15, 2021)** - The H-2B Workforce Coalition, comprised of thousands of employers and their representatives from industries such as lodging, landscaping, seafood, restaurants, tourism, equine, forestry, amusement parks, golf courses, and other seasonal businesses, are grateful to Reps. Cuellar (D-TX), Joyce (R-OH), Keating (D-MA) Pingree (D-ME), Chabot (R-OH), and Harris (R-MD) for introducing the bipartisan the Returning Worker Exception Act of 2021.

This legislation would reform the H-2B program by exempting returning workers from an antiquated cap, ensuring that small and seasonal businesses are able to fulfill their labor needs and contribute to our nation's post-pandemic economic recovery. The bill would also improve efficiencies with the application process and require the Department of Labor to maintain a publicly accessible online job registry. Finally, the legislation would strengthen program integrity measures and anti-fraud provisions to protect both American workers and H-2B workers.

“On behalf of the entire Texas green industry, we thank Congressman Cuellar for his leadership in introducing the bipartisan “Returning Worker Exception Act of 2021” and his effort to meet the workforce needs of employers in our state,” said Amy Graham, President & CEO of the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association. “Our seasonal industry in Texas contributes over \$27 billion dollars in economic impact but continues to face severe workforce shortages and is hindered by the antiquated federal labor programs. The ‘H-2B Returning Worker Exception Act’ is the key to helping our Texas green industry businesses grow and invest in the future by addressing the arbitrary caps within the H-2B seasonal visa program while also providing new protections for American workers.”

“As our industry continues to struggle, we ask for the returning worker exemption simply because, without an adequate workforce, we will certainly witness the loss of not only an iconic industry but an industry that coastal communities around the entire gulf rely upon for their economic stability,” said Andrea Hance, Executive Director of the Texas Shrimp Association.

According to Paul Sacco, President & CEO, Massachusetts Lodging Association, “The H-2B visa program is critical in supplementing our domestic workforce during our peak season on the Cape and throughout the Commonwealth. On the heels of the

pandemic, many hotels and resorts throughout Massachusetts face a severe worker shortage coupled with increasing demand, and the need for temporary legal guest workers is even more acute. We are thankful that Rep. Bill Keating (MA-10), along with Reps. Cuellar, Chabot and Joyce, Pingree and Harris are introducing the Returning Worker Exception Act of 2021 which will provide robust integrity measures to improve the H-2B visa program while simultaneously providing much needed cap relief through a returning worker exemption.”

“I’d like to thank the sponsors of this important legislation, including Congressmen Chabot and Joyce. The H-2B Visa Program provides a valuable lifeline to those golf facilities across the country and here in Ohio who have exhausted all efforts to find domestic workers. Golf has had its highest number of rounds played during the COVID-19 pandemic. We need access to the temporary, legal workers to keep our courses open and providing Americans with the opportunity to enjoy the health and recreational benefits of our game,” said Mark Jordan, Natural Resource Leader at Westfield Country Club in Westfield Center, Ohio and Golf Course Superintendent’s Association of American president and 34 year member.

Piscataqua Landscaping & Tree Service as a member of the Federation of Employers and Workers of America (FEWA) stated “We would like to thank Representative Pingree (D-MD), Representative Cuellar (D-TX) and all the other cosponsors for their leadership on the vitally important The Returning Worker Exception Act of 2021. FEWA is a non-profit association created to assist employers and workers in labor-intensive service industries.” Piscataqua Landscaping & Tree Service has serviced the Maine area since 1979 and has utilized the H-2B program since 2012. “This legislation is critically important to both employers and workers that depend on the viability of the H-2B program. For employers, the H-2B program provides access to critical seasonal labor when, despite intensive recruitment efforts, positions cannot be filled with American workers. For workers, the program provides well-compensated seasonal jobs that allow them to provide for their families and still maintain their homes in their native countries. The H-2B program has been oversubscribed to such an extent that multiple administrations and Congressional sessions have attempted to provide relief to the H-2B community. We are encouraged by the legislation introduced and hope that Congress will pass this important legislation.”

Mick Brajavich, Outdoor Amusement Business Association member and CEO of Butler Amusements in Fairfield California, the largest carnival company in the western United States, said “Our schedule includes dozens of fairs and festivals. We strive to create affordable family entertainment and are dedicated to providing customers with safe, thrilling rides and a wide variety of food and game concessions. As a seasonal employer, we rely on temporary non-immigrant foreign workers to re-join us on the route, supplementing our 160 American employees. The legislation being introduced by Reps. Cuellar, Joyce and others would provide permanent relief to an outdated and inadequate cap on the number of available visas. We appreciate their efforts.”

“The H-2B program is vital to the entire Maryland economy. I am grateful to Dr. Andy Harris, Rep. Cuellar and all of the cosponsors of the H-2B Returning Worker Exception Act for putting forth these common sense reforms to the H-2B program,” said Alan Jones, President of Manor View Farm in Monkton, MD. “This legislation

will allow the nursery and landscape industry in Maryland to thrive, adding additional Americans jobs and revenue to the state.”

The H-2B Workforce Coalition looks forward to working with Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to passing this bi-partisan legislation to reform the H-2B program during ongoing workforce shortages for seasonal businesses.

**About the H-2B Workforce Coalition**

The H-2B Workforce Coalition is a consortium of industry associations throughout the United States that have joined together to protect American workers by ensuring American small and seasonal employers have access to legal short-term temporary workers during peak business periods.

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Press Contacts:

Lisa Stryker, National Association of Landscape Professionals  
[Lisa@landscapeprofessionals.org](mailto:Lisa@landscapeprofessionals.org)  
(540) 729-2114

Maura Morton, American Hotel & Lodging Association  
[mmorton@ahla.com](mailto:mmorton@ahla.com)  
(202) 381-8644

Tal Coley, AmericanHort  
[TalC@AmericanHort.org](mailto:TalC@AmericanHort.org)  
(410) 807-1083

Greg Chiecko, Outdoor Amusement Business Association  
[gregc@oaba.org](mailto:gregc@oaba.org)  
(407) 848-8010

