

## **Essential Worker Immigration Coalition Iowa Chapter**

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Thank you for expressing interest in the Essential Worker Immigration Coalition ("EWIC"). As you know, Iowa businesses are faced with a very frustrating problem: we have jobs, but not enough workers to fill them. Often, those workers we find turn out to be undocumented immigrants whom we cannot legally hire. Although the Governor is urging businesses to consider immigrants to fill our workforce shortages, there is no practical way to bring many of the most-needed workers to the US, either temporarily or permanently.

Fortunately, a national coalition of businesses, trade associations and immigration lawyers has been working for a number of years to raise awareness of this problem. EWIC has prepared changes to the immigration laws that would help ease workforce shortages here and all over the US. The membership list for EWIC is attached, and includes more than 30 national members.

This year, EWIC decided that the best way to convince Congress that these changes are needed was to start grassroots "chapters" throughout the US. We hope that through the local efforts of the chapters, the voice of employers crying for a way to solve these frustrating problems could finally get the attention it deserves.

This is where you come in. We hope you and your organization will join in our efforts to make the needed changes in our immigration laws. We do not ask for any financial contribution, but simply that you participate in making your voice heard. EWIC will supply you with information and opportunities to contact your congressmen and shape public opinion. We only ask that you take advantage of these opportunities and lend your name to our efforts.

To join the Iowa Chapter of EWIC, please complete the attached form, and return it to us. We will put you on our mailing list and also add your name to the membership list of EWIC. If you have any ideas for ways to make a difference, we want to hear from you! Please contact us at the address below. Thank you in advance for your efforts to keep Iowa working.

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**Essential Workers Immigration Coalition  
c/o Lori T. Chesser  
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515.288-2500 fax 515.243-0654  
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**Essential Worker Immigration Coalition  
Iowa Chapter**

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\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to join the Essential Worker Immigration Coalition.

Business name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Please contact these other possible EWIC members:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:

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## **MEMBERS**

American Health Care Association  
American Hotel & Motel Association  
American Immigration Lawyers Association  
American Meat Institute  
American Road & Transportation Builders Association  
American Nursery & Landscape Association  
Associated Builders and Contractors  
Associated General Contractors  
Building Service Contractors Association International  
The Brickman Group, Ltd.  
Carlson Hotels Worldwide and Radisson  
Carlson Restaurants Worldwide and TGI Friday's  
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store  
Harborside Healthcare Corporation  
Ingersoll-Rand  
International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions  
International Mass Retail Association  
Manufactured Housing Institute  
Nath Companies  
National Association for Home Care  
National Association of Chain Drug Stores  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds  
National Council of Chain Restaurants  
National Retail Federation  
National Restaurant Association  
National Roofing Contractors Association  
National Tooling & Machining Association  
National School Transportation Association  
Outdoor Amusement Business Association  
Resort Recreation & Tourism Management  
US Chamber of Commerce

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(As of September 20, 2000)

## ESSENTIAL WORKERS KEEP THE ECONOMY GROWING

### What are Essential Workers?

- **“Essential Workers”** are the unskilled and semi-skilled workers that are employed in all sectors of our economy. Essential workers include restaurant workers, retail clerks, construction trades people, manufacturing lineworkers, hotel service workers, food production workers, landscape workers, and health care aids. These individuals often work in the jobs that many Americans do not choose, but which are “essential” to keep our economy and our country growing.

### Is there a Shortage of Essential Workers?

- **Yes.** Our robust economy has resulted in tight labor markets in virtually all sectors of the economy and in most areas of the country. Unemployment nationally is at its lowest point in 30 years, having been at 5% or below (which used to be considered “full employment”) since April 1997!
- **The shortage could hurt our economy.** Chairman Alan Greenspan of the Federal Reserve has noted extensively in Congressional testimony that tight labor markets threaten the continued growth of the economy and could result in inflation. The Federal Reserve’s “Beige Book” of Current Economic Conditions, reports “Many Districts noted the lack of available workers continued to hamper overall economic growth.” Companies report difficulties retaining permanent staff and hiring replacements, curtailing expansion plans, and many small businesses are struggling to survive without enough employees.

### Aren’t there enough U.S. workers for these Jobs?

- **The demographics say no.** The Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that by 2006 we will have 10 million more jobs than people in the workforce. This shortage is expected to last for two decades!
- **Unemployment is below “full employment” rates.** 60% of metropolitan areas have unemployment rates of 4% or less, 30% have rates of 3% or less and 5% have rates of 2% or less! This essentially means that everyone who is employable is employed.
- **Employers are doing the “right” things.** Essential Worker employers have led the way in welfare-to-work, school-to-work and other initiatives that have been successful in reducing welfare rolls and getting graduates jobs, but it is still not enough. Employers are raising wages, offering improved benefits, signing bonuses and relocation pay, but it’s still not enough.

**Isn't there already an immigration category for essential workers that these employers can use?**

- **No.** The H-2B temporary visa classification is only useful for employers who can establish that their need for foreign workers is temporary, that is: seasonal, a one-time occurrence, or a peakload or intermittent need. If the employer's need is year-round or does not fall into one of the definitions used by the Department of Labor or Immigration Service, the employer cannot use the H-2B classification to fill its labor needs. A nonimmigrant visa category does not exist for employers who need workers for more than one year or for employers who cannot demonstrate that their need is temporary. This is particularly onerous for employers, for example in the construction and hospitality industries or for those involved in elder and childcare. Although a permanent immigrant category exists for non-professionals in occupations that require less than two years' experience, the backlog of waiting cases is over ten years long, making the category useless. As a result, employers are often forced to send their work overseas, cut back, or close their doors.

**What needs to be Done?**

- **Chairman Greenspan and others have called upon Congress to reexamine our immigration policies as a means to alleviate the labor shortages.**
- **Congress Needs to Update Our Immigration Laws to Meet the Needs of Our Growing Economy.** Employers need a regulated, workable immigration system that allows them to sponsor foreign nationals when there is evidence of a shortage of available U.S. workers, and that allows those individuals already here and working to obtain status. The program should allow foreign nationals to obtain green cards in a reasonable amount of time.

**KEEP AMERICA WORKING, FIX OUR IMMIGRATION SYSTEM!**

### 5. Texas Senator Pushes for Guest Worker Program

Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) plans to encourage President-elect George W. Bush to propose a guest worker program for Mexican nationals as soon as he officially takes office. Sen. Gramm and five members of the Senate Banking Committee met in Mexico City last week with Mexican President Vicente Fox, who has been calling for a guest worker deal as a way of alleviating illegal migration.<sup>18</sup> "I go back to Washington convinced that we have laid the foundation for an ultimate agreement on a guest worker program," said Sen. Gramm, adding that he plans to initiate Senate hearings on the subject as early as this week.<sup>19</sup>

Sen. Gramm's activism on the issue surprised many immigration advocates and labor leaders who described the conservative Republican as "traditionally...opposed [to] immigration and labor law reforms."<sup>20</sup> Sen. Gramm reiterated his opposition to illegal immigration, but added that "we have millions of people who are working illegally in America. They do not have protection under the law for their rights. It is a terrible situation. They are important to the American economy, yet they are violating our laws."<sup>21</sup> He suggested that those Mexican nationals already working in the U.S. without authorization could be first in line to apply for any such new work authorization.<sup>22</sup>

Despite expected criticism from labor unions and other groups, Sen. Gramm says he believes such a program could be in place within the year.<sup>23</sup> "I believe if both presidents are for it, we can sell it to the American people and we can sell it to individual union members," he said, adding that illegal immigration will not stop until a viable guest worker program is put in place.<sup>24</sup> ■

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<sup>18</sup> See *Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 11, 2001; Cox News Service, Washington Bureau, Jan. 11, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Id.

<sup>20</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 11, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Cox News Service, Washington Bureau, Jan. 11, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> See *Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 11, 2001; Cox News Service, Washington Bureau, Jan. 11, 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Id.

<sup>24</sup> Reuters News Service, Jan. 10, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> *Washingtonpost.com*, Jan. 9, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Id.

<sup>27</sup> *Washingtonpost.com*, Jan. 8, 2001.