

**Shawn McBurney, Co-Chair**  
American Hotel &  
Lodging Association

**Laurie Flanagan, Co-Chair**  
American Nursery &  
Landscape Association  
Professional Landcare  
Network

**Executive Committee:**

American Horse Council

American Immigration  
Lawyers Association

American Rental Association

American Trucking  
Associations

Asian American Hotel  
Owners Association

Associated Builders and  
Contractors

Associated General  
Contractors of America

Essential Worker  
Immigration Coalition

Federation of Employers  
and  
Workers of America

Interlocking Concrete  
Pavement Institute

International Association of  
Amusement Parks and  
Attractions

International Franchise  
Association

National Association of  
Realtors

National Club Association

National Federation of  
Independent Business

National Fisheries Institute

National Restaurant  
Association

National Roofing  
Contractors Association

National Ski Areas  
Association

National Thoroughbred  
Racing Association

Outdoor Amusement  
Business Association

Tree Care Industry  
Association

U.S. Apple Association

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

March 10, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer:

On behalf of seasonal employers from the lodging, landscaping, waterman, restaurant, tourism, construction and other industries, we are encouraged to see that you quickly scheduled and passed H.R. 1127, a bill to extend visa classifications for religious workers and international medical graduates, on the House Suspension Calendar on March 4.

During the last Congress, there was a great deal of concern about the consideration of such "piecemeal" immigration measures, despite the urgent need to renew successful policies in existing guest worker programs. We are happy to see that this is indeed not the case as evidenced by the speedy consideration and passage of H.R. 1127 a mere 7 legislative days after its introduction.

We strongly encourage you to now schedule H.R. 1136, "The Save Our Seasonal and Small Business Act of 2009," for immediate consideration by the House.

As you have correctly recognized, temporary visas, whether they be for international medical graduates, religious workers or America's small business owners, are a vital component of economic growth and the retention of American jobs in industries nationwide. H.R. 1136 will renew a critical returning worker exemption that small business owners often rely to fill seasonal jobs when sufficient domestic workers are not available.

The H-2B program has historically been very successful by allowing these businesses to supplement and support their full-time American workforce with seasonal temporary workers during their peak seasons. As you know, only after employers have engaged in extensive efforts to recruit American workers do they turn to the H-2B program, which is a much more expensive and time-consuming process.

The H-2B visa and the returning worker provision have proven to be much more than a simple temporary worker visa program. It has become a key to survival for small businesses nationwide. Without access to this vital program, many of our nation's small and seasonal employers will have no choice but to shutter their businesses. A prime example of this can be found in Maryland's crab industry. As noted in the *Baltimore Sun* article on February 6, 2009: "If Congress does not move quickly to make more [H-2B Visas] available, other [crab] processors say they won't open this spring. And the loss of a year's income, several say, means that they probably would shut their businesses for good."

We urge you to take steps now that will provide a lasting solution to our nation's seasonal employment needs.

Sincerely,

The H-2B Workforce Coalition

cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives