



March 19, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction industry trade association with 69 chapters representing more 21,000 members, I am writing to express our support for the Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act (H.R. 1740) introduced by Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-Pa.). This important legislation would help address the workforce needs of the construction industry by providing critical access to temporary workers.

As the country continues to thrive and unemployment hovers around its lowest rate in half a century, the construction industry needs access to more workers to fill a backlog of existing jobs. The Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act would create a new visa program, capped at 85,000 positions annually, while providing important protections for employers and employees and ensuring that jobs remain available for hardworking Americans.

Under the bill, employers are required to apply to the federal government for an approval to hire a new temporary foreign worker, and these workers may not enter the United States until they have been hired by an employer that has received the required government approval. These employees are only allowed to work for an approved employer at an approved location and in the specific job that was approved, and all participating employers would be required to use E-Verify.

To strengthen workforce protections, the program features full portability for both employers and employees, making it unique from other current visa programs. Further, the bill only allows employers to apply for the new visa program if they operate in counties or metro areas where unemployment is 5 percent or lower, ensuring that jobs remain available for American citizens.

ABC members are committed to the betterment of the communities in which they work and would greatly benefit from much-needed access to temporary workers. We encourage all members of the House of Representatives to support this legislation, which will help address a critical workforce issue in the construction industry and reduce the backlog of current projects to advance our communities and local economies.

Sincerely,

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President of Legislative & Political Affairs