

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 5, 2009

COMPANIES LAYING-OFF THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN WORKERS DON'T NEED GUEST WORKERS

Please Co-sponsor the Employ America Act

Dear Colleague:

Since the recession started in December of 2007, 7.6 million Americans have lost their jobs and the unemployment rate has doubled. In total, 15.1 million Americans are officially unemployed, another 9.2 million Americans are working part-time only because they cannot find a full-time job, and 2.2 million workers have given up looking for work altogether.

With the unemployment rate skyrocketing and millions of people looking for a job, we have a responsibility to ensure that companies do not use temporary visa programs to replace American workers with cheaper labor from overseas.

Therefore, we hope you will join us in co-sponsoring the Employ America Act. This legislation would simply prohibit companies that have announced mass lay-offs over the past year from hiring guest workers, unless they can prove that their overall employment will not be reduced as a result of these lay-offs.

At a time when millions of Americans are out of work, the notion that we need to import labor from abroad because there are not enough qualified, willing or able American workers in this country rings hollow.

Recently, some of the very companies that have hired tens of thousands of guest-workers from overseas have announced large scale lay-offs of American workers. The high-tech industry, a major employer of H-1B guest workers, has laid-off over 345,000 workers since August of 2008. The construction industry, a major employer of H-2B guest-workers, has laid-off 1.5 million workers since December of 2007.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan, signed into law last February, included a provision to prevent companies receiving assistance through the Troubled Asset Relief Program from replacing laid-off American workers with guest-workers from overseas.

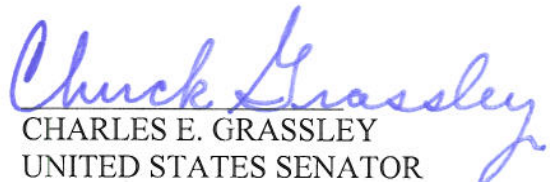
The Employ America Act expands upon this provision to prevent any company engaged in a mass lay-off of American workers from importing cheaper labor from abroad through temporary guest-worker programs. Those companies that are truly facing labor shortages would not be impacted by this legislation and could continue to obtain employer-sponsored visas. Only companies that are laying-off a large number of Americans would be barred from importing foreign workers through guest worker programs.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please have your staff contact Warren Gunnels in Sen. Sanders' office at 8-6358 or Kathy Nuebel Kovarik in Sen. Grassley's office at 4-3744.

Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS
UNITED STATES SENATOR



CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
UNITED STATES SENATOR