

September 18, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Smith
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Smith,

NumbersUSA -- the nation's largest grassroots organization for controlled immigration, with an active network of more than 8 million U.S. citizens -- enthusiastically endorses the Legal Workforce Act as the most cost effective and efficient way to improve the lives of millions of Americans who are still struggling at the bottom of the economic ladder.

The Legal Workforce Act would at last substantially fulfill the promise of the 1986 amnesty to stop outlaw businesses from giving U.S. jobs to foreign citizens who overstay their visitor visas or cross the border illegally. In so doing, historic experience suggests, millions more jobs would both be available and be improved for the American workers and legal immigrants already here who would be recruited and trained to fill them.

Most of these jobs are in construction, manufacturing, hospitality and other service occupations in which millions of Americans already are seeking full-time jobs.

Your legislation also serves the interests of enlightened community-minded business owners and officials who seek a level-playing field in which their own good wages and working conditions for employees can no longer be undercut by unscrupulous competitors who engage in illegal hiring practices.

In light of the proven reliability and the high customer satisfaction ratings of the E-Verify system, we particularly applaud the requirement in your bill that all businesses in the nation use the system for new hires within 2 ½ years.

We also are pleased that the Legal Workforce Act ends the big weakness of the current E-Verify system that allows illegal workers who have stolen legitimate identities to get through the system and obtain a job. Your bill is an "E-Verify PLUS" bill that handles that weakness with an essential multiple-workplace notification system that results in the removal of existing illegal workers who are using stolen identities.

It is especially because of the "PLUS" part of this bill that we assess it to be a powerful tool to reduce under-employment in this country. We hope to see the Social Security "no-match" program added to the bill during debate to add an extra layer of cost-effective enforcement.

The Legal Workforce Act also respects that states and localities have a role in helping enforce immigration laws. We are pleased that the bill allows states and localities to use a variety of enforcement tools, including the Federal employment authorization enforcement system and the revocation of business licenses.

Amidst significant recent improvements for some Americans, large numbers are missing out. For example, the median income for all men is still stuck down at the 1975 level. Five million more Hispanic Americans are in poverty than in 1990. Competition from millions of illegal workers is only one of several major factors in wage stagnation and declined work participation rates for Americans. But illegal immigration is one factor that the federal government can easily control by taking away the chief incentive for foreign citizens to break our laws -- the ability of U.S. employers to hire illegal foreign workers.

The people who would most benefit from your legislation are those in demographic groups who are having the most difficult time in this economy: Black and Hispanic Americans, the disabled, people trying to rebuild their lives after incarceration, and Americans without college degrees, especially younger adults.

In short, the Legal Workforce Act reflects the high moral principles on economic justice and fairness advocated by the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform chaired by the late Barbara Jordan. National governments owe their most vulnerable citizens protection from uncontrolled immigration.

Finally, serious observers of the problems on our borders recognize that the most important action that Congress could take to reduce the illegal traffic there would be to eliminate illegal crossers' belief that they will be able to obtain employment. Thus, the Legal Workforce Act would likely be the most effective border security bill ever passed.

Sincerely,



Roy Beck
President, NumbersUSA