



## REP. TONY GONZALES INTRODUCES THE HIRE ACT

Press Release from Rep. Tony Gonzales  
July 18, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Tony Gonzales (TX-23) introduced the H-2 Improvements to Relieve Employers (HIRE) Act with 15 bipartisan, original cosponsors. The HIRE Act strengthens temporary work visa programs, addresses the national workforce shortage, and remedies our nation’s broken immigration system.

“I represent 119 cities in Texas. From urban cores to rural communities, one thing unites them all: a desperate need for labor. Unfortunately, solutions such as temporary work visa programs are riddled with red tape, making it difficult for employers to fully staff up. This is especially true for small businesses, farmers, ranchers, and so many others on Main Street that are struggling to get by. In order for our economy to reach its full potential, we need to strengthen and streamline work visa options, which is precisely what the HIRE Act seeks to do,” said Congressman Tony Gonzales.

The HIRE Act is cosponsored by U.S. Representatives Monica De La Cruz (R-Texas), Henry Cuellar (D-Texas), Vicente Gonzalez (D-Texas), Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.), Darren Soto (D-Fla.), Stephanie Bice (R-Okla.), Chris Pappas (D-N.H.), Nicole Malliotakis (R-N.Y.), Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.), John Duarte (R-Calif.), Maria Elvira Salazar (R-Fla.), David Valadao (R-Calif.), Mike Lawler (R-N.Y.), Jefferson Van Drew (R-N.J.), Don Bacon (R-Neb.), and James Moylan (R-Guam).

### Statements of Support for the HIRE Act:

American Farm Bureau Federation: “Labor is one of the biggest limiting factors in American agriculture, and true reform to guest worker programs is needed more than ever. We appreciate Representative Gonzales for introducing the HIRE Act, which will help streamline H-2A and H-2B to make hiring qualified workers easier and enable farmers to continue stocking the pantries of America’s families.”

U.S. Chamber of Commerce: “The U.S. Chamber of Commerce welcomes the introduction of the H-2 Improvements to Relieve Employers Act. The HIRE Act will

help hospitality firms, agricultural commodity producers, forestry companies, seafood processors, landscapers, and many other businesses find seasonal workers for hard-to-fill jobs. The HIRE Act will codify visa interview waiver authority for H-2 workers and extend the validity of a company’s visa petitions and labor certifications, which will diminish the onerous compliance burdens for employers desperately seeking the workers they need. We look forward to working with the bill’s sponsors to move this legislation forward.” - Jon Baselice, Vice President of U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Immigration Policy.

Americans for Prosperity: “With over 9 million job vacancies in the U.S., seasonal businesses are struggling the most to find enough workers. Many of these businesses are located in rural areas and aging communities, where local hiring options are becoming increasingly limited. If passed, the HIRE Act would streamline the H-2A and H-2B visa programs, ensuring that our immigration system better serves the needs of working Americans,” said Sam Peak, Senior Policy Analyst at Americans for Prosperity

National Immigration Forum: “The HIRE Act would increase workforce stability in the agricultural and food sectors, as well as other key industries that rely on temporary workers. By reducing processing delays and simplifying the renewal process, the HIRE Act makes commonsense updates to our worker visa programs,” said Laurence Benenson, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, National Immigration Forum.

United State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: “The USHCC is in support of this legislation to help our U.S.-based companies retain the necessary talent needed to lead the world in innovation and productivity. As we seek to satisfy the labor needs of our business community, especially the 5 million Latino-owned businesses in this country, streamlining the process for H-2A and H-2B employers removes barriers for economic growth,” said Ramiro Cavazos, President and CEO, USHCC

Border Trade Alliance: “The Border Trade Alliance applauds Rep. Tony Gonzales for his sponsorship of the HIRE Act. We agree strongly with Rep. Gonzales that reducing the bureaucratic burdens that plague our H-2 visa programs will help meet the country’s labor needs, lower costs,



reduce illegal immigration, and make the economy more competitive. On behalf of the BTA's public and private sector members, we are proud to support this important legislation and look forward to it becoming law," said Britton Mullen, president, Border Trade Alliance

LIBRE Initiative: "Due to cumbersome and excessive regulations, family-owned farms and small businesses across America have difficulty hiring the workers they need. When seasonal employers struggle to grow, rural communities are deprived of local investment, new jobs created, and access to quality goods and services. The reforms outlined in the HIRE Act will bring transparency and simplicity to the H-2A and H-2B work visa programs, benefitting U.S. businesses, employees, and consumers alike," said Daniel Garza, President of The LIBRE Initiative

Texas Farm Bureau: "Texas farmers and ranchers continue facing severe challenges finding reliable agricultural labor," said Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening. "The time to provide workable solutions to our current flawed H-2A program is now. Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) strongly supports the H-2A Improvements to Relieve Employers (HIRE) Act, which would help streamline our current agricultural guest worker program. We thank Congressman Tony Gonzales for working on this legislation and being a champion for American farmers and ranchers."

Texas Nursery & Landscape Association: "TNLA supports the effort by Rep. Gonzales in the HIRE Act to improve the H-2B visa program for employers and reduce the federal bureaucracy. This program is critical to the workforce of the landscape industry in Texas as each H-2B visa worker helps support 4.64 American jobs," said Amy Graham, CEO & President, Texas Nursery & Landscape Association

Fresh Produce Association of the Americas: "The Fresh Produce Association of the Americas applauds Rep. Tony Gonzales for his proposed HIRE Act. Ever since the pandemic and the supply chain crunch issues, employers along the border have struggled to stay at full employment. With Rep. Gonzales's streamlined H-2B provisions, this bill would be helpful to fill in the gaps for employers who are in desperate need of workers in cross-border trucking/logistics, as well as in the warehouse setting. With the demand for new warehouses, even construction crews are

not able to keep pace," said Lance Jungmeyer, President, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas

Texas Border Coalition: "The Texas Border Coalition is proud to support to the bi-partisan HIRE Act, which would enhance the nation's temporary work visa programs," said El Paso County Commissioner David Stout, chairman of the Texas Border Coalition. "By expanding the H-2A/H-2B labor certification period to three years and permanently authorizing the waiver of in-person interviews for returning workers, we can create a more accessible and reliable system."

Texas Association of Business: "In this tight labor market, the last thing our small businesses need is more red tape. The HIRE Act cuts costs and reduces backlogs by ensuring a more efficient application process for temporary work visas. As the Texas State Chamber, TAB thanks Congressman Gonzales for leading on this bipartisan, pro-jobs legislation," said Glenn Hamer, President & CEO of the Texas Association of Business.

Texans for Economic Growth: "H-2A and H-2B workers are crucial to the economy. Texans for Economic Growth, a coalition of over 145 Texas business leaders and associations, applaud the efforts of Congressman Gonzales to recognize and support these workers' positive impact," said Chelsie Kramer, State Organizer for Texans for Economic Growth. "The HIRE Act is an important step forward, demonstrating a collaborative approach to immigration policy can result in solutions that benefit all Americans, businesses, and essential foreign-born workers."

**Texas Business Leadership Council:** "The **Texas Business Leadership Council** recognizes that H-2A and H-2B workers play a vital role in maintaining and increasing the economic health of our state and nation. As such, we want to thank Congressman Gonzales for introducing The HIRE Act. This legislation acknowledges the essential work being done through these programs. We believe the Congressman's plan provides a path to bipartisan immigration policy that builds a stronger national framework for employers and foreign-born workers, the result benefiting all Americans," said **Justin Yancy**, President of the **Texas Business Leadership Council**.



South Texas Cotton & Grain Association: “The guest worker program has become increasingly important for farmers in our region. Any effort to improve and streamline the process will have a direct benefit for our farmers utilizing the program,” said Jeff Nunley, Executive Director, South Texas Cotton & Grain Association.

rely on foreign guest workers in a historically tight labor market. The landscape industry is the largest user of the H-2B program, and we greatly appreciate the leadership of Rep. Gonzalez and all the original cosponsors to work towards much needed permanent reforms to the H-2B guest worker program.”

U.S. Trotting Association: “The U.S. Trotting Association (USTA), the nation’s leading association of Standardbred horse owners, breeders, drivers, and trainers, is proud to support the HIRE Act, which makes important changes to the H-2B visa program to make it more efficient for businesses and participants alike,” said CEO Mike Tanner. “The Standardbred horseracing industry is growing, and we must ensure that we have enough qualified workers to sustain it. The H-2B visa program is vital to our members, which consists primarily of small businesses, to access a critical and legal workforce. The USTA is thankful for the leadership of Rep. Tony Gonzales (TX-23) and the other cosponsors for tackling a tough but critical issue for small businesses across the country.”

National Horsemen’s Benevolent & Protective Association: “The horseracing industry relies on the H-2B visa program and its workers to operate,” said National Horsemen’s Benevolent & Protective Association (National HBPA) CEO Eric Hamelback. “As the largest Thoroughbred horsemen’s organization, the National HBPA always strives to first employ American workers whenever possible, but also employ H-2B workers, when necessary, which helps grow the sport and industry and ultimately employ more Americans. We are grateful for Rep. Tony Gonzales’ (R-TX-23) leadership on this issue, as well as the support of the original co-sponsors. This bill will make incremental but crucial changes to the program and help businesses and workers all across America operate more efficiently within it.”

National Association of Landscape Professionals: “The National Association of Landscape Professionals commends Representative Gonzales and the bipartisan coalition of co-sponsors that have introduced the H-2 Improvements to Relieve Employers Act. The H-2B guest worker program is currently broken and the HIRE Act takes some significant steps towards reducing redundancy in the process and saving time for the seasonal businesses that