

June 10, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
United States House of Representatives
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

We write as chief executive officers of American companies, some large, some small, to express our support for immigration reform. We urge Congress to act, the sooner, the better, to fix immigration so it works for our businesses and our communities.

There are many things that are broken about the immigration system and many problems that need to be addressed.

We need better border security and better immigration law enforcement, including in the workplace. Congress needs to provide American employers with a way to verify if new hires are who they say they are and are eligible to work.

With secure borders in place, we will also need a practical solution for the millions of immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. Most unauthorized immigrants are otherwise law-abiding and doing needed work – work that bolsters U.S. prosperity and sustains jobs for Americans. We should provide them with an opportunity to come forward and earn their way onto the right side of the law.

But meaningful reform must look beyond today's unauthorized immigrants. The heart of reform is fixing the legal immigration system so it makes America more competitive in the future, admitting the immigrant workers we need and preventing future illegal immigration.

All our companies rely on legal immigrants working alongside Americans to keep our businesses growing and contributing to the economy. This is a reality driven by demographics. In 1950, more than half of America's workers were high school dropouts willing to do physically demanding, low-skilled work. Today, the figure is less than 5 percent. But our businesses still need less-skilled workers – and the need will only grow in years ahead. Baby boomers are retiring: 10,000 older workers are leaving the workforce every day. And after a long downturn, most of our operations are expanding and looking to hire workers.

The problem: there is virtually no legal way for less-skilled foreigners without family

in the U.S. to enter the country and work in year-round jobs – effectively no temporary or permanent visas available for non-seasonal workers.

Congress has an obligation to fill this gap – we need a visa program for less-skilled foreign workers seeking year-round jobs. Employers should have to try to hire

Americans first. But if they can't find enough U.S. workers, they should be able to hire foreign workers quickly, easily and legally.

This is indispensable for our businesses, but it's also critical for the nation. Without a workable temporary visa program, the U.S. can have no hope of ending illegal immigration.

An overwhelming majority of the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S. today would rather be here legally. They mostly came or stayed illegally because there was no workable, lawful way for them to enter the country and work. And if we fail to create a legal way for similar workers to come to the U.S. in the future, we're going to find ourselves in exactly the same predicament 10 or 20 years from now – wondering what to do about millions of *new* unauthorized immigrants.

Our broken immigration system is not a problem that can be put off. The stakes could hardly be higher. We need Congress to act.

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