



STATEMENT
October 21, 2011

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FRESH THINKING ABOUT VISAS

Several members of Congress have made news in recent weeks by floating ideas for legislation to create new visas or streamline the visa process for foreigners working or investing in the United States.

- *Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and cosponsor House Judiciary Committee chair Lamar Smith (R-TX) introduced a bill that would eliminate country quotas for employment-based green cards, shortening wait times for many skilled professionals seeking to work in the U.S.*
- *Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) introduced a bill that would give residence visas to foreigners who spend \$500,000 or more to buy homes in the U.S.*
- *Rep. Raul Labrador (R-ID) introduced a measure that would speed up applications for permanent residency filed by foreign-born graduate students offered jobs by high-tech employers in the U.S.*
- *Both Rep. Dan Lungren (R-CA) and House Judiciary chair Lamar Smith have introduced bills to make it easier for farmers to hire temporary migrant workers.*
- *Sen. Mike Lee introduced a bill that would allow foreign temporary workers employed on dairy farms to stay in the U.S. year-round instead of returning home like seasonal workers.*

ImmigrationWorks USA president Tamar Jacoby made the following statement:

For years, Congress has been paralyzed and unable to act on immigration. Now, presidential candidates from both parties are using the topic as a wedge issue – instead of looking for opportunities to compromise on solutions, many are straining to woo voters with empty promises or demagoguery. All the more refreshing to see some lawmakers looking for answers.

The five bills introduced in recent weeks are built on the same all-important understanding: that immigration is a boon to the U.S. economy. Even with today's high unemployment, employers in many sectors – agriculture, high-tech, seasonal businesses – continue to need immigrants to keep their operations running and contributing to the economy. These foreign workers sustain and create jobs for Americans. They revitalize our communities. And as the economy improves, they will play an essential role in the nation's recovery.

We should be making it easier not harder for intrepid, entrepreneurial people to move to the U.S. and build lives among us. Each of these bills seeks to do that, and each is a step in the right direction. Together, they also give the lie to the idea that only one political party is trying to fix the immigration system.

**IW USA president Tamar Jacoby can be reached for comment at
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ImmigrationWorks USA is a national federation of small business owners advocating immigration reform. The organization links 25 state-based, pro-immigration business coalitions: employers and trade associations from Florida to Oregon and from every sector of the economy that relies on immigrant workers. IW works closely with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Restaurant Association, the National Association of Home Builders, the Associated General Contractors of America and other leading trade groups. Members of the board of directors include Marriott chairman and CEO Bill Marriott, former AZ Rep. Jim Kolbe and syndicated columnist Linda Chavez.