

## ImmigrationWorks USA



*The business voice on immigration*

## INVITE A MEMBER OF CONGRESS TO TOUR YOUR BUSINESS

Of all the critical questions facing lawmakers working to craft immigration reform, none is more pressing than how to fix the legal immigration system so it works for employers and for the U.S. economy. But few lawmakers understand how less-skilled immigrants boost American prosperity. Business owners who rely on foreign workers need to educate members of Congress about the economic benefits of immigration: how immigrant workers help keep their businesses open and competitive and support jobs for Americans up and downstream in the local economy.

One of the most effective ways to get this message across: invite a member of Congress to tour your business. Little makes more of an impression on a lawmaker than a visit in his or her district. And no one can make the case about the economic benefits of immigration better than an employer who counts on an immigrant labor force.

**Lawmakers to target.** Members who don't understand the economic need for immigrant workers. Members who are on the fence about a temporary worker program. Members who support reform but don't understand that what's most important is fixing the legal immigration system so it works for the future.

**Matching lawmakers and employers.** What industry in your area relies most heavily on immigrant workers? If the lawmaker you're targeting is already familiar with that sector, perhaps choose another industry that also depends on foreign labor. One potential tactic: match a member who is familiar with agricultural issues and has fought for a better agricultural worker program with an employer in a *different* sector that the member is less familiar with – perhaps a restaurateur or other non-farm business owner.

**The first inquiry.** The best way to prevent an awkward refusal or misunderstanding: if a trade association or other intermediary explores interest on both sides before an invitation is issued. Once the association receives a positive response, the employer should reach out directly with an invitation sent to the lawmaker and the scheduler in his or her office.

**The visit.** The last thing a lawmaker wants to do when he or she arrives at a business is sit down in an office. We recommend that the employer meet the member outside and take him or her on a tour of the operation. Members will want to meet employees – particularly those who vote. They should also be introduced to immigrant workers. Among the topics the employer might raise during the tour: the kinds of jobs held by immigrant workers, how the business tries to hire Americans, the wages offered, how immigrants help keep the business open and contributing to the economy. The employer should also make sure the member knows what reforms the host believes should be included in an immigration overhaul – the more specific, the better.

**ImmigrationWorks is eager to help you organize a tour. Please contact Jill Borak, [jbolak@immigrationworksusa.org](mailto:jbolak@immigrationworksusa.org), and let us know how we can assist you.**

*ImmigrationWorks USA is a national federation of employers working to advance better immigration law. The network links major corporations, national trade associations and 25 state-based coalitions of small to medium-sized business owners concerned that the broken immigration system is holding back the nation's economic growth. Their shared aim: legislation that brings America's annual legal intake of foreign workers more realistically into line with the country's labor needs.*