

Regarding LD2167:

The impact of imported workers is grossly understated. H2A workers and asylum seekers lower the dollar value of Maine workers, displace Maine workers, and force reallocation of Maine resources away from Mainers. Even so few as 10 imported workers has greatly impacted our state.

Cindy Reiter, here. I have been a Maine small business owner since 2004. For nearly 20 years, we have fed and clothed our kids, paid our mortgage, taxes, utilities, and employed from three to seven people annually renovating hotels here in Maine. Last year, we were significantly impacted by imported labor.

In July, our company was cut out of nearly \$64,000 when a hotelier replaced us with H-2A workers. Three of these workers confirmed they were paid \$14/hour with no compensation for overtime. These workers were hired to perform wall repairs in the hotel that was ironically damaged by asylum seekers who had lived in this hotel for more than a year at taxpayer expense.

The hotelier repeatedly told me the hotel was still occupied by the asylum seekers and delayed work while two of our employees sat in wait. Only when I demanded my contract be honored was I granted access to the property. When I discovered no asylum seekers remained and saw firsthand the H2A workers performing work I had budgeted for my employees, I had an argument with the hotel owner in the parking lot. I did leave the job but later returned as I had to salvage what I could for my team.

As a direct result of this, four Maine residents became displaced workers.

For the first time in 10 years, I had ZERO reported earnings for my third quarter.

To get the walls ready for my team to install wallpaper, I was forced to train the replacement workers to prepare the walls. The H-2A workers were not trained and brought with them only the ability to lay bricks which was not useful in drywall repair.

On July 12, 2023, I met with Rep. Craig Hickman to discuss this. Mr. Hickman offered no legitimate insight and while he promised to follow up with emails, he has ignored my attempts to contact him since then.

It is lawfully stated in Section 1188, THE ADMISSION OF TEMPORARY H2A WORKERS, Conditions for approval of H2A petitions in paragraph 1, subparagraph A that a petitioner may not be granted unless the petitioner has applied to the Secretary of Labor for a certification that:

- (A) There are not sufficient workers who are able, willing, and qualified, and who will be available at the time and place needed, to perform the labor or services involved in the petition and
- (B) The employment of the alien in such labor or services will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of workers in the US and similarly employed.

IF 10 H2A workers can do this much damage to one Maine business in one month, imagine the impact THOUSANDS will have. I and many MAINERS are absolutely demanding REPRESENTATION from our elected officials. We demand you abide by the LAWS CURRENTLY IN PLACE, and PUT FORTH A SINCERE EFFORT TO PROTECT MAINE JOBS, MAINE HOMES, AND MAINE CITIZENS.

