



Dear Member of Congress:

As executives of some of the nation's largest hotel companies, we are keenly aware of the need for comprehensive immigration reform. Collectively, in our 8,064 hotels in the United States, we employ over 331,000 people – many of whom are foreign-born.

As global leaders in an industry that was brought to its knees in the wake of September 11, 2001, we understand the critical importance of securing our borders and vigorously support such efforts. However, isolating our nation from legitimate commerce, travelers and labor would be counterproductive, for both our economy and long-term security.

One thing we can all agree on is that the current immigration system is badly broken. We believe in a balanced solution that protects our borders and recognizes the contributions of – and the need for – the foreign-born workers in our economy.

In the void of Federal legislation, we are seeing states and local governments passing laws to regulate immigration. This developing patchwork of laws driven by emotion rather than informed debate poses significant problems for major employers like us that have properties in states and counties nationwide. In order to ensure continued economic vitality, Congress and the Administration must come together to create a balanced federal solution that secures our borders and ensures the continued growth of our economy.

Unemployment rates are at near record lows of 4.4% and Baby Boomers are beginning to retire. Even the most conservative economic forecasts predict that the lodging industry will need an additional 300,000 employees over the next several years. We are already experiencing major labor shortages and have difficulty recruiting talented and hard-working individuals. There just aren't enough people to do the jobs we already have – let alone sustain our growth.

We provide competitive wages and benefits for our valued associates – and our companies are listed as some of the best places to work. While many of our employees may start in entry level positions, they don't often stay there for long. We are a service industry that absolutely depends on good people – hotels cannot be automated or outsourced, nor can personal service – you need the committed employees to create the great customer service for which we are known.

While we are encouraged by the progress being made by Congress and the Administration, we have an acute need for immigration reform that requires action now. We'd like to see a solution that:

- Secures our borders;
- Creates a clear, legal channel by which employers can get the seasonal and permanent immigrant labor they need, both now and in the future;
- Provides a solution to deal with the undocumented already here. Removing undocumented workers from an economy with near full employment would be devastating and enormously counterproductive; and
- Establishes a fast, efficient, and accurate employment verification system so when we hire someone, we know they are authorized to work.

We could not operate our hotels without workers from other countries. It is time for Congress and the Administration to pass legislation that will achieve a true solution to our broken immigration system.

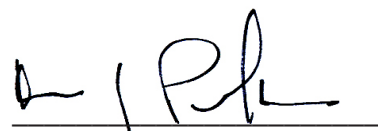
Respectfully,




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