



Feb. 13, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell,

The National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) commends you for opening debate in the Senate to consider immigration reform proposals. NRCA urges lawmakers to work on a bipartisan basis to craft sensible immigration reform legislation that meets our nation's security and economic needs.

Established in 1886, NRCA is one of the nation's oldest trade associations and the voice of professional roofing industry employers worldwide. NRCA's 3,600 member companies represent all segments of the industry including: contractors, manufacturers, distributors, consultants and other employers who employ more than 250,000 workers in all 50 states. NRCA members are typically small, privately held companies with the average member employing 45 people and attaining sales of about \$4.5 million per year.

The severe problem of chronic workforce shortages, of qualified workers, is the most significant limitation on the ability of roofing industry employers to grow their businesses in today's economy. Most contractors indicate they could be doing 10 to 20 percent or more work if they could only fill vacant positions, which translates to an estimated \$3.6 billion to \$7.2 billion in lost economic activity annually. Workforce shortages will become even more acute in the future because of an aging workforce and other demographic trends, as well as, ongoing rebuilding efforts resulting from recent hurricanes and other disasters.

Immigration reform that meets the workforce needs of the roofing industry is vital to addressing chronic workforce shortages and boosting economic growth. Sensible immigration reform should address the workforce needs of the roofing industry in a manner that ends illegal immigration without encouraging a black-market economy. NRCA supports increased border security; mandatory E-Verify for all employers (as contained in the Legal Workforce Act, H.R. 3711); providing a visa system to allow workers to enter the U.S. legally when our economy needs them; and addressing the existing unauthorized workforce in a balanced manner.

Any effective plan to end illegal immigration should provide for *legal* immigration in accord with economic demand in sectors such as roofing. To address this need, Congress should establish a visa program that is governed by market forces; ensures employers undertake vigorous efforts to hire U.S. workers first; is easy to use for employers; and enables job creators to obtain the workers needed to meet demand and grow their businesses.

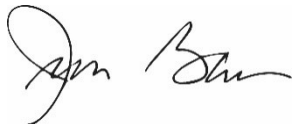
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NRCA urges the Senate to address the situation of unauthorized individuals brought to the U.S. as minor children, along with increased border security measures long overdue. This should involve a legislative solution for those eligible for the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. NRCA also supports legislation to allow individuals who qualified for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to adjust to legal permanent resident status. This would allow individuals from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti who have been working *legally* within the roofing industry for years to continue contributing to their communities and our economy.

NRCA appreciates various proposals put forward by the White House and some senators, including reforms designed to move immigration policy to a more merit-based system. We agree our immigration system should be more merit-based according to economic needs; however, it is imperative any new system recognize the need for legal immigration in sectors like roofing when jobs will otherwise go unfilled by U.S. workers. Providing for sufficient legal immigration to meet economic demand is critical to addressing the future workforce needs of the roofing industry. We know, given current demographic and educational trends, future demand for a skilled workforce in roofing cannot be met solely by the existing native-born population. Reducing future levels of legal immigration, as some proposals would do, would be harmful to the future of the roofing industry, as well as, the overall U.S. economy.

As the debate regarding immigration reform continues, NRCA looks forward to working with lawmakers in a bipartisan manner to develop balanced solutions that fix our broken immigration system and provide for robust economic growth. Thank you for your consideration of our views regarding this important issue. For more information, please contact Duane Musser in NRCA's Washington, DC, office at 202-546-7584 or dmusser@nrca.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Barr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Barr" clearly distinguishable.

Jim Barr
Barr Roofing Company, Abilene, TX
Chairman of the Board, NRCA

Cc. All Members of the U.S. Senate