

Immigration and Labor Shortages

Article By:

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The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are far-reaching. The labor shortage plaguing America has been one of the most publicized. Why is it so difficult for some employers to find employees? The 2020 United States Census [offers possible reasons](#): an aging population decreased fertility rates, and low rates of immigration.

The 7.4% population increase reported in the 2020 Census is [one the smallest increases ever](#) – second only to the one following the Great Depression. While pro-family policies can help to increase family size, according to a policy expert, “immigration is a much more reliable driver of population growth.” [Studies have shown](#) that immigration provides a younger workforce, the entrepreneurial workers, and the skilled employees needed for essential industries such as healthcare, construction, agriculture, and food processing.

[According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#), “a worker shortage is holding back job creators across the country.” [It is also leading to](#) “supply-chain bottlenecks and higher prices for businesses and consumers.” The Census had forecasted a 1.4 million increase in immigrants from 2017 to 2019. Instead, the [figure was much smaller](#) – 400,000. That is one reason the Chamber and others are lobbying to double the number of H-1B and H-2B visas available, to ease the labor shortage and all the economy to surge.

The labor shortages are being felt perhaps [most acutely in areas of the country](#) that had, before the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced great population and economic growth, such as Northwest Arkansas and other non-coastal areas. In many of these areas, economic booms have been fueled by immigrants. Without immigrants, [these areas could experience](#) zero or negative population growth, a smaller workforce, and an aging economy.

The [Biden Administration has expressed](#) time and time again that it is committed to implementing long-term immigration reform. The fact is, we are [losing immigrant entrepreneurs and talent to other nations](#), and our longevity in an increasingly competitive world is tied to an immigration policy that makes sense in the 21st-century economy.

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren recently introduced a bill that creates a new nonimmigrant visa for startup founders. This [bill creates a direct path to a green card](#) if the start-up entity meets certain benchmarks that demonstrate the founder has a proven track record of success in business development, then the founder can apply for and receive lawful permanent residence. The bill will

also create nonimmigrant visa categories for managerial and executive employees of the startup entity. [Common sense policies](#), such as Lofgren's bill, will ensure America remains the primary destination for the world's best and brightest.

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