

*EWIC Statement
September 17, 2025*

Essential Worker Immigration Coalition (EWIC) Statement on the Reintroduction of the Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act

The Essential Worker Immigration Coalition (EWIC) commends Representatives Lloyd Smucker (R-PA), Mark Amodei (R-NV), Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ), Henry Cuellar (D-TX), Don Davis (D-NC), Andy Harris (R-MD), Mike Kelly (R-PA), Maria Salazar (R-FL), Tom Suozzi (D-NY), and Rich McCormick (R-GA) for their bipartisan leadership in reintroducing the *Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act* on September 18, 2025. This critical legislation takes an important step toward addressing chronic workforce shortages by creating a market-driven visa pilot program for year-round, non-farm jobs in occupations that do not require a college degree. To see the bill, please visit: [H.R.5494 - 119th Congress \(2025-2026\): To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for an H-2C nonimmigrant classification, and for other purposes. | Congress.gov | Library of Congress.](#)

The legislation provides a practical solution to one of the most pressing challenges facing employers across the country. From construction and food processing to hospitality, manufacturing, healthcare and many other industries, businesses continue to struggle to find sufficient workers to meet demand. The Act establishes a new H-2C visa designed to fill these essential roles in a way that strengthens compliance, protects U.S. workers, enables employers to create more jobs and expands economic growth.

Key elements of the *Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act* include:

- **Market-based visa pilot system:** A flexible annual cap that adjusts based on economic conditions, up to 85,000 positions, ensuring the program responds to real workforce needs.
- **Employer and worker accountability:** Employers must meet labor market tests, comply with E-Verify, and secure federal approval before hiring an H-2C worker. Workers must have a confirmed job offer through the government's hiring system.
- **Full portability:** Workers may move among approved employers with valid authorizations, protecting them from exploitation and ensuring employers can access talent when shortages persist.
- **Stronger compliance tools:** An electronic tracking system modeled on existing visa monitoring programs, mandatory studies on economic and labor impacts, and strict limits to ensure visas are only used to address workforce shortages.
- **Balanced safeguards:** Visas are limited in duration, renewable only under defined conditions, and do not authorize family migration, ensuring the program remains focused on meeting essential workforce needs.

EWIC believes this legislation represents a thoughtful, commonsense approach to modernizing America's workforce system in a way that both supports economic growth and protects U.S.

workers. By creating a lawful channel for employers to meet proven workforce needs, the Act reduces incentives for unauthorized migration and reinforces the integrity of the U.S. labor market.