



RELEASE: Iowa Business Council Members Urge Immediate Immigration Reform

Citing the need for an increased diverse talent pool, IBC members ask for reform

(DES MOINES)—Today, members of the Iowa Business Council (IBC) addressed members of Congress at their third quarter meeting. In addition to advocating for the swift passage of the US-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement, they asked elected officials to consider thoughtful reforms to the U.S. legal immigration system that reflect employer needs, market forces and workforce demands.

This year, IBC's annual report, [Iowa's Competitive Dashboard](#), found Iowa's population growth and diversity is relatively low compared to other states. From the research, IBC members identified growing a diverse population as one of their high-level initiatives. The call for specific immigration reforms fits into this overall strategy.

"To ensure the Iowa economy continues to expand, we need to develop concrete steps to increase our population and skilled workforce," Mary Andringa, Chair of the Iowa Business Council stated. "We believe our requests can garner bipartisan support and know that members of Congress can move them forward to create statewide economic stability and lay foundation for Iowa's growth."

"The incremental reform in our requests can make significant differences to the growth and prosperity of Iowa companies," Tim Yaggi, president and CEO of Pella Corporation stated. "We will continue to advocate for pro-growth, pro-Iowa strategies with our elected leaders as our companies work for Iowa's overall economic vitality."

To increase the diverse talent pool for our employers and economic growth of the state, the IBC is asking members of Congress to collectively work towards passage of key workforce reforms. IBC members suggest the passage of the following reforms to keep the economy moving:

- Meaningfully expand H-1B visas and exempting from the annual cap H-1B workers who have degrees in needed fields from U.S. universities.
- Afford work authorization provisions for spouses of certain H-1B workers in order to allow the US, and Iowa, to compete with other countries that allow spousal work authorizations.
- Simplify the processing program for H-1B employers with proven records of compliance to create efficiencies for employers, employees and the government.
- Accelerate the processing of visas to eliminate the current backlog of approved employment applications.
- Modernize and expedite the green card application process for H-1B workers hired into permanent positions and significantly expand the annual limits.
- Provide an efficient process for employers to hire and retain talent graduating from U.S. universities for permanent employment. Policy can reflect best practices from the current successes of the STEM Optional Practical Training program.

- Create flexibility in H-2A and H-2B programs for employers and workers and lengthen the employment timeframe for temporary workers in high-demand jobs and in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and food processing.

Instead of holding immigration reform captive for a complete overhaul of the system, IBC members urge members of Congress to address the workforce shortage and opportunity for expansion by making common sense reforms to immigration policy that will directly benefit Iowa and the United States as a whole.

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About the Iowa Business Council

The Iowa Business Council (IBC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose 23 members are the chief decision makers of major Iowa employers. One in six jobs in Iowa are tied to an IBC company. IBC member companies have invested billions of dollars of capital in Iowa's commercial infrastructure; lead the way in technology innovation, R&D, and grants procured; and are often the driving financial and volunteer forces behind philanthropic efforts all over the state.

IBC member companies include: Alliant Energy; Casey's General Stores, Inc.; Collins Aerospace; Corteva Agriscience; Deere & Company; Fareway; FBL Financial Group, Inc.; HNI Corporation; Hy-Vee, Inc.; Iowa Bankers Association; Kent Corporation; MercyOne; Meredith Corporation; MidAmerican Energy Company; Pella Corporation; Principal; Ruan Transportation Management Systems; UnityPoint Health; The University of Iowa Health Care; Vermeer Corporation; The Weitz Company; Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Iowa; and Wells Enterprises, Inc.