

Rep. McDowell offered the following concurrent resolution:

House Concurrent Resolution No. 12.

A concurrent resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to increase the number of workers allowed into this country under the H2B visa program.

Whereas, Seasonal workers are a key component of our state's and our nation's tourism and recreation industries. Annually, thousands of young men and women use seasonal employment to begin their journey on the path to a career. Many tourism areas, however, do not have the populations necessary to fill all the seasonal jobs available. In Michigan, for example, world-renown Mackinac Island hires up to 4,500 seasonal workers each year. Its 500 year-around residents cannot begin to supply the workforce necessary for peak season employment levels; and

Whereas, Foreign workers supplement the seasonal staff needs in a host of our tourism and recreation destinations. Many of these employees are in our country under the H2B visa program; and

Whereas, Currently, the H2B visa program caps the number of visas available at 66,000. This cap has been reached in each of the past two years, just as the national economy has surged and more and more people are traveling. This cap has also distorted hiring patterns across the nation, as employers are forced to put on workers far beyond service needs to help assure that they will have the employees they need when their season begins; and

Whereas, Legislation has been introduced in Congress to revise the H2B visa program. The measure would temporarily increase the cap, provide for a fair distribution of visas, and enhance visa security. Clearly this is an issue that needs prompt action; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to increase the number of workers allowed into this country under the H2B visa program; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the Michigan congressional delegation.