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POLICY BRIEF

# IMMIGRATION REFORM

## WE SUPPORT:

✓ **Legislative and administrative proposals** that would provide a **clear path to legalization for workers**

✓ Creating a viable **essential worker program to meet workforce needs**

✓ Improving **border security while still facilitating travel and tourism**

✓ Implementing a **reliable and efficient federal employment verification system**

## LEARN MORE

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[RestaurantsAct.com](https://RestaurantsAct.com)

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## ISSUE OVERVIEW

Restaurants are the cornerstone of every community. Many generations of immigrant families have brought the best of their traditions and cultures to our family table and provide a vital role in the restaurant industry. The industry continues to be a home for immigrants from all over the world seeking to build a new life and achieve the American Dream. The relationship benefits both sides: Immigrants gain valuable job experience and immediate access to new opportunities, and restaurateurs can fill positions at every level.

The current immigration system is broken and congressional reform is long overdue. Now, more than ever, as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a strong economic incentive to fix it because legal immigration creates a strong workforce, which is the backbone of economic growth and prosperity. As such, the National Restaurant Association supports bipartisan, commonsense immigration reforms that expand U.S. employers' ability to hire a legal workforce. Our reform principles include the following:

### ✓ PROVIDE A PATHWAY TO LEGALIZATION

More than 11 million undocumented individuals are living and working in the United States. Many are paying taxes and contributing to the economy and their communities. Numerous polls show that the public strongly supports a clear path to legalization for these workers. Restaurants support this too.

### ✓ CREATE A VIABLE ESSENTIAL WORKER PROGRAM TO MEET WORKFORCE NEEDS

Immigrants play a key role in the restaurant industry's growth and diversity. We support a new program that would legally match willing workers with willing employers—a viable year-round temporary worker visa program for the service sector. Such a program would play a key role in addressing the workforce needs of restaurants and other hospitality employers. It is time to create a visa program that allows legal foreign-born workers to come into the United States under a controlled process to work year-round.

# ■ IMMIGRATION REFORM

## ✓ SECURE THE BORDER AND PROMOTE LEGITIMATE TRAVEL AND TOURISM

The United States needs stronger security at its borders. However, any steps to increase security should also facilitate travel and tourism to the United States. Travel and tourism drives approximately one-fifth of all restaurant sales and boosts economic activity across all sectors.

## ✓ IMPLEMENT A RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION PROGRAM

Many states and localities have passed their own employment verification laws. This patchwork of laws creates an untenable system by forcing restaurants and other employers to comply with different laws across multiple jurisdictions. The Association supports a consistent national standard that helps employers hire in a timely, efficient and respectful manner. We support the "[Legal Workforce Act](#)" sponsored by former Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX).

