



# Workforce Shortage Solution:

## Co-Sponsor H.R. 1325 to Remove Barriers to Work Permits and Let Asylum Applicants Work

*H.R. 1325 is a bipartisan bill that would bolster the U.S. workforce by allowing would-be workers who have pending asylum applications to access their work permits sooner AND reduce obstacles in maintaining their work authorization. It's a win-win-win for businesses, families working to get on their feet, and whole communities.*

**The Challenge:** Businesses across the nation are struggling with unprecedented worker shortages, especially in the hospitality and manufacturing industries. At the same time, people in the United States pursuing asylum want to work but face unnecessary bureaucratic delays in obtaining work permits. Under current law, asylum applicants must wait for at least 6 months *after* they have applied for asylum to receive a work permit. Unfortunately, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is experiencing massive case processing backlogs, which can make this waiting period much longer. It is not unusual for people to have to wait for eight months to a year or more to receive their work permits. During this time potential employers are left in limbo, with economic losses for both them and asylum applicants.

### The Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act (H.R. 1325) would:

- 1. Get people work permits sooner:** Currently, asylum applicants have to wait at least 180 days for a work permit. H.R. 1325 will bring that time down to 30 days, getting would-be workers into the workforce as soon as possible.
- 2. Remove paperwork burdens on businesses and individuals:** H.R. 1325 would grant work authorization while an asylum case is fully processed, eliminating the need for businesses to repeatedly deal with work permit renewal paperwork and other burdens related to lapses in employees' work authorization caused by government backlogs. This is particularly key for small businesses without human resources departments.

Given processing delays and backlogs, USCIS has been forced to automatically extend certain work permits – meaning that these work permits have an expired date on their face but are still valid. These autoextensions are a confusing band-aid solution, often resulting in employers who badly need workers letting them go and facing unnecessary turnover costs or not hiring available asylum applicants in the first place (because they believe these workers are ineligible to work).

- 3. Reduce bureaucracy and processing backlogs:** By eliminating work permit renewal requirements, H.R. 1325 removes needless government bureaucracy that has a negative impact on businesses and the economy at large. As of April 1, 2023, there are currently 289,310 asylum work permit renewals pending at USCIS. Freeing up those resources for processing underlying applications will allow would-be workers to get to work faster, achieve stability, help businesses and local communities thrive, and grow our economy.