

**LIFTING HOLD ON H.R. 3012 — (Senate - July 11, 2012)**

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Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I lift my hold on H.R. 3012, the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act. This bill would eliminate the per-country numerical limitations for employment based immigrants and change the per-country numerical limitations for family-based immigrants. When I placed a hold on the bill, I was concerned that the bill did nothing to better protect Americans at home who seek high-skilled jobs during this time of record unemployment. Today, I lift my hold because I have reached an agreement with the senior Senator from New York, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security.

I have spent a lot of time and effort into rooting out fraud and abuse in our visa programs, specifically the H-1B visa program. I have always said this program can and should serve as a benefit to our country, our economy and our U.S. employers. However, it is clear that it is not working as intended, and the program is having a detrimental effect on American workers.

For many years, Senator *Durbin* and I have worked on legislation to close the loopholes in the H-1B visa program. Our legislation would ensure that American workers are afforded the first chance to obtain the available high paying and high skilled jobs in the United States. It would make sure visa holders know their rights. It would strengthen the wage requirements, ridding the incentives for companies to hire cheap, foreign labor.

While I could not get everything that was included in the Durbin-Grassley visa reform bill, there is agreement to include in H.R. 3012 provisions that give greater authority to program overseers to investigate visa fraud and abuse. Specifically, there will be language authorizing the Department of Labor to better review labor condition applications and investigate fraud and misrepresentation by employers. There is also agreement to include a provision allowing the Federal Government to do annual compliance audits of employers who bring in foreign workers through the H-1B visa program.

I appreciate the willingness of other members to work with me to include measures that will help us combat visa fraud, and ultimately protect more American workers. I look forward to working with others as H.R. 3012 progresses in the Senate.

**END**

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