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September 21, 2021

Senator Robert Menendez
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Frank Pallone
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Cory Booker
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Tom Malinowski
1318 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Donald Norcross
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Albio Sires
2268 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Jeff Van Drew
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Bill Pascrell
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Andy Kim
2444 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Donald Payne
106 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Christopher Smith
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill
1414 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Josh Gottheimer
203 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman
168 Cannon Office Building,
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation,

As leaders of the Garden State's major business associations, the New Jersey Business Coalition writes to you to request an expansion of the J1 visa program to allow more workers and students from around the world to learn and participate in the New Jersey economy.

Immigration plays a key role in the success of the New Jersey economy. Nearly 30% of all workers in our state are immigrants. Permanent and short-term immigration measures allow the New Jersey workforce to expand and evolve to meet the needs of the business community.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, critical immigration programs have been significantly reduced or halted all together in order to protect against the impacts of COVID-19 on the workforce and

public health. Businesses and institutions of higher education have suffered greatly from the lack of immigrant visas issued to potential workers and students that typically supplement our domestic workforce and student populations.

In 2019, 5,272 recipients of J1 summer work travel visas came to New Jersey for temporary employment opportunities. This was the sixth highest total of immigrant summer workers of any state in the nation. Many New Jersey businesses, especially those in the tourism industry, rely heavily on foreign exchange workers to maintain their operations throughout the summer. For some shore businesses, these workers can make up close to half of their seasonal workforce in a typical year.

Unfortunately, the pandemic upended much of this staffing model. On June 22, 2020, President Trump signed Presidential Proclamation 10052, halting the J1 visa program with the intent of protecting American workers from overseas competition and high unemployment during the covid-19 pandemic. As a result, in 2020, there were only 1,546 J1 visa participants in the state.

Presidential Proclamation 10052 expired in March, 2021, but businesses continued to struggle to find J1 visa workers. In 2021, the lack of available visa holders exacerbated the workforce shortage businesses across industries continue to face. In the tourism sector, many businesses were forced to limit their hours of operation and business offerings or close entirely due to lack of staffing. Educational institutions in New Jersey have also suffered from a lack of J1 visa recipients. In 2020, only 420 students and scholars received J1 visas in New Jersey as opposed to 1,623 in 2019. Five professors received J1 visas in the state, down from 22 recipients in 2019.

As colleges and universities in our state continue to face significant financial strains as a result of the pandemic, increasing the number of student visa recipients in New Jersey will bolster university revenues through enrollment. Student, scholar and professor visas also allow for increased diversity of thought and perspectives in the classroom, enhancing the educational experience and creating a stronger, more culturally aware workforce.

As we continue to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic, we urge our Congressional delegation to ensure that the J1 visa program returns to pre-pandemic immigration levels. An international workforce and student base is essential to the operation and recovery of many educational institutions and businesses in need of critical support to recover from the unprecedented challenges of the past 18 months.

Thank you for considering this important request from the New Jersey business community. We look forward to further discussing this critical issue. If you have any questions, please contact NJBIA Chief Government Affairs Officer Chrissy Buteas at cbuteas@njbias.org.

American Camp Association NY/NJ
American Institute of Architects/ NJ Chapter
American Council of Engineering Companies of New Jersey
American Physical Therapy Association of New Jersey
Big I New Jersey
Burlington County Regional Chamber of Commerce

Cape May County Chamber of Commerce
Capital Region Minority Chamber of Commerce
Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia
Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey
Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey
CrossState Credit Union Association
Downtown New Jersey
Early Childhood Education Advocates
Eastern Monmouth Area Chamber of Commerce
Employers Association of NJ
Fuel Merchants Associates of NJ
Garden State Pharmacy Owners, Inc
Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
Greater NJ MotorCoach Association
Greater Toms River Chamber of Commerce
Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce
HealthCare Institute of New Jersey
Hoboken Chamber of Commerce
Home Care & Hospice Association of New Jersey
Home Health Services Association of New Jersey
Hudson County Chamber of Commerce
Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce
Insurance Council of New Jersey
Jersey Shore Partnership
Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce
Marine Trades Association of New Jersey
Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce
Meadowlands Chamber
Monmouth Ocean Development Council
Morris County Chamber of Commerce
NAIOP-NJ
National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)
Newark Alliance
Newark Regional Business Partnership
New Jersey Asphalt Pavement Association
New Jersey Association of Mental Health & Addiction Agencies
New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
New Jersey Bankers Association
New Jersey Business & Industry Association
New Jersey Camps Government Affairs Project
New Jersey Campground Owners and Outdoor Lodging Association
New Jersey Civil Justice Institute
New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers
New Jersey Concrete and Aggregate Association

New Jersey Council of County Colleges
New Jersey Dental Association
New Jersey Fitness Alliance
New Jersey Food Council
New Jersey Gasoline-Convenience-Automotive Association
New Jersey Hotel and Lodging Industry Association
New Jersey Independent Electrical Contractors Association
New Jersey Liquor Store Alliance
New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc.
New Jersey Motor Truck Association
New Jersey Pharmacists Association
New Jersey Podiatric Medical Society
New Jersey Restaurant & Hospitality Association
New Jersey Retail Merchants Association
New Jersey Salon and Spa Coalition
New Jersey Self Insurers Association
New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants
New Jersey State Funeral Directors Association
New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce
New Jersey State Veterans Chamber of Commerce
New Jersey Tourism Industry Association
New Jersey Warehousemen & Movers Association
New Jersey YMCA State Alliance
New York Shipping Association, Inc.
NJ Society of Optometric Physicians (NJSOP)
North Jersey Jewish Business Alliance
Ocean City Chamber of Commerce
Phillipsburg Chamber of Commerce
Princeton Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce
Salem County Chamber of Commerce
Somerset County Business Partnership
Southern NJ Development Council
Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce
Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ
Sussex County Chamber of Commerce
TechUnited:NJ
The Greater NJ Motorcoach Association
Washington Borough BID