

H.R. 3644 – Boilermaker Availability Act

H.R. 3644, bipartisan legislation introduced by Rep. Joe Wilson (SC-2) and Rep. Eliot Engel (NY-17), provides boilermakers an exemption from the statutory cap on annual H-2B visas to perform work that is crucial to maintaining our nation's infrastructure. This legislation would ensure visas are available for IBB's Canadian members when they are needed to supplement our domestic workforce.

Failure to secure visas for our Canadian members could result in lost work for U.S. Boilermakers. Critical plant repairs and pollution control projects could be put off if the qualified, skilled workforce needed is not available. There is substantial concern from boilermaker contractors and the IBB regarding the procedure to process visas, and the potential surge in demand for boilermaker labor in the event of a scheduled or emergency power plant outage should the statutory cap be met within the first few months of the year, which was the case in the past two fiscal years.

The availability of qualified, union Boilermaker labor is vitally important to our nation's energy security. Given the expected increase in energy demand, our nation's energy infrastructure and national security could be at risk should highly trained and certified boilermakers not be exempt from the statutory cap. Further, Boilermakers will be high demand in coming years as power generating facilities seek to comply with new clean air regulations.

Status:

H.R. 3644 has 22 bipartisan cosponsors and has been referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Boilermakers' Message to Representatives:

- Cosponsor H.R. 3644, the Boilermaker Availability Act.