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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

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April 24, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor
State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Moore:

The Committee on Education and Workforce (Committee) is investigating the practice of issuing “Statements of Interest” (SOIs) in support of certain foreign workers’ deferred action requests to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) during the Biden-Harris administration.¹ It appears that union organizers have co-opted this program, which is supposed to protect employees against potential retaliation, by encouraging certain foreign workers to file claims against employers. As part of the Committee’s investigation, we seek information from the Maryland Department of Labor’s Division of Labor and Industry (DLI) to understand the extent to which the State of Maryland has assisted union organizers in misusing the deferred action program.

The Committee has seen examples of union organizers exploiting the deferred action program contrary to Congress’s intent. In one such example, a national trade union flyer posted online suggests that union organizing is the first step in accessing deferred action.² The flyer suggests that a grant of deferred action is a reward, stating that a grant of deferred action is a “WIN” for the employee. The flyer further states at the top in bold capital letters: “DEFERRED ACTION = WORK PERMIT FOR 2 YEARS + SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.”³ Instead of protecting immigrant workers from retaliation, outside groups seem to be interested in subverting deferred action to push unionization.

¹ See DHS SUPPORT OF THE ENFORCEMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAWS, <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/information-for-employers-and-employees/dhs-support-of-the-enforcement-of-labor-and-employment-laws>.

² DEFERRED ACTION FOR WORKERS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW (displaying “ORGANIZE with your co-workers and your union!” as the first step on a graphic presenting how workers are using deferred action), <https://aflcio.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/Deferred%20Action%20for%20Workers%20ENG.pdf>.

³ *Id.*

More concerning is that during the Biden-Harris administration there seemed to be little regard for the criminal background or immigration status of workers accessing deferred action protections. While DHS appears to consider criminal history to be a significant barrier to deferred action,⁴ DHS nevertheless grants deferred actions to some individuals with problematic histories. A practice manual published by an immigration advocacy group for immigration practitioners representing workers applying for labor-based deferred action explains:

In the first year and a half of Labor-Based Deferred Action applications, the vast majority of applications have been approved. This includes applications from workers with a variety of negative equities, such as a criminal record (including DUIs, domestic violence, controlled substance possession, and multiple misdemeanor arrests), several past deportations, or open removal proceedings. Numerous workers who entered the United States after November 2020, and are thus considered “threats to border security” under the Mayorkas priorities memo have also been approved. These results are consistent with the fact that DHS rightly treats a labor agency Statement of Interest as a strong positive equity, which may outweigh many common negative equities.⁵

The Committee understands that through DLI, Maryland has abused the deferred action process by employing overly broad SOIs that may wrongly cover workers. DLI appears to have applied SOIs on a worksite-wide basis instead of using a more targeted approach. According to the DLI website, “DLI will typically submit a Statement of Interest for an entire worksite and not name individual workers.”⁶ Given the great weight that DHS places on SOIs with respect to labor-based deferred action, the Committee is interested in learning more about how DLI has involved themselves in the process.

Accordingly, the Committee requests additional information about the nature and number of these SOIs to determine whether potential legislation is needed on this matter. Specifically, the Committee requests that DLI provide information responsive to the following requests by no later than May 8, 2025:

1. Copies of any SOIs sent by DLI to DHS in support of a request for labor-based deferred action since January 20, 2021;
2. The total number of SOIs that DLI issued in connection with labor-based deferred action requests since January 20, 2021. Please indicate how many individuals these requests covered and what percentage of requests covered an entire worksite;

⁴ PRACTICE MANUAL: LABOR-BASED DEFERRED ACTION 30 (Sept. 4, 2024), <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/labor-based-deferred-action-manual.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.* at 21.

⁶ See DLI, SUPPORT FOR WORKER REQUESTS FOR IMMIGRATION-RELATED PROSECUTORIAL DISCRETION - FAQs - EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS SERVICE (ESS), <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/labor/wages/essfaqimmigrationrelprosdiscrretion.shtml>

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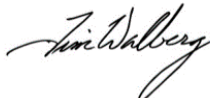
3. A description of DLI's process for determining which workers or worksites an SOI covered since January 20, 2021; and
4. Any training materials, internal memoranda, or guidance used by DLI to determine whether to issue SOIs since January 20, 2021.

Congress' broad authority to conduct oversight and investigative actions is inherent in Article I of the U.S. Constitution.⁷ The U.S. Supreme Court has also repeatedly ruled that the power to conduct oversight is an essential function of Congress.⁸ Additionally, House rules provide direction to standing committees in matters of oversight. Specifically, House Rule X outlines the organization, general oversight responsibilities, and special oversight functions assigned to standing committees.⁹ The Committee takes these responsibilities seriously and reserves the right to review and investigate any issues within its jurisdiction.

This Committee has an interest in monitoring Maryland's use of deferred action protections to ensure that it aligns with congressional intent. The Committee's investigation of the deferred action program is within the Committee's jurisdiction on which legislation "could be had."¹⁰ Information from DLI and may assist the Committee in determining whether legislative changes are warranted. Please provide responsive documents in accordance with the enclosed instructions, titled "Responding to Committee Document Requests."

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Tim Walberg
Chairman

CC: The Honorable Kristi Noem, Secretary of Homeland Security
Devki Virk, Commissioner, Division of Labor and Industry
Portia Wu, Secretary of Labor, Maryland Department of Labor

Enclosure

⁷ U.S. CONST. art. I.

⁸ *See, e.g.,* Nixon v. Admin. of Gen. Serv., 433 U.S. 435 (1977); Eastland v. U.S. Servicemen's Fund, 421 U.S. 491 (1975); Barenblatt v. U.S., 360 U.S. 109 (1959); Watkins v. U.S., 354 U.S. 178 (1957); McGrain v. Daugherty, 273 U.S. 135 (1927).

⁹ House Rule X cls. 1-3.

¹⁰ Trump v. Mazars USA, LLP, 591 U.S. 848, 863 (2020) (internal citations omitted).

Responding to Committee Document Requests

1. The state's response to questions and request(s) should be answered or provided in a separate document and not included inside a narrative response.
2. In complying with this request, you should produce all responsive documents that are in your state's possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or other past or present employees of the state government, or a representative acting on your behalf. Your response should also produce documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that the state has a right to copy or to which you have access, or that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party.
3. Records, documents, data, or information that have been requested and/or are related to underlying requests should not be destroyed, modified, removed, transferred, or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee on Education and Workforce (the "Committee").
4. If any entity, organization, or individual denoted in this request has been, or is also known by any other name, than that herein denoted, the request shall be read also to include that alternative identification.
5. The Committee's preference is to receive documents in electronic form (i.e., email, CD, memory stick, or thumb drive) in lieu of paper productions. To the extent responses are provided in paper form, any documents that are stapled, clipped, or otherwise fastened together should not be separated. Documents produced in response to a request should be produced together with copies of file labels, dividers, or identifying markers with which they were associated when this request was issued.
6. Regardless of format, documents produced pursuant to this request should be produced in the order in which they appear in your files and should not be rearranged. Indicate the office or division and person from whose files each document was produced.
7. Regardless of format, documents produced to the Committee should include an index describing the contents of the production and a total page count for the entire production. To the extent more than one CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, box, or folder is produced, each CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, box, or folder should contain an index describing its contents. Documents produced in electronic format should also be identified and indexed electronically.
8. Electronic document productions should be prepared according to the following standards:
 - (a) The production should consist of single page Tagged Image File ("TIF"), files accompanied by a Concordance-format load file, an Opticon reference file, and a file defining the fields and character lengths of the load file.
 - (b) Document numbers in the load file should match document Bates numbers and TIF file names.

- (c) If the production is completed through a series of multiple partial productions, field names and file order in all load files should match.
9. All documents shall be Bates-stamped sequentially and produced sequentially.
 10. When you produce documents, you should individually identify the paragraph, question number, or request number in the Committee's request to which the documents respond.
 11. It shall not be a basis for refusal to produce documents that any other person or entity—either inside or outside of the state government—also possesses non-identical or identical copies of the same documents.
 12. If any of the requested information is only reasonably available in machine-readable form (such as on a computer server, hard drive, or computer backup tape), the state's staff should consult with the Committee staff to determine the appropriate format in which to produce the information.
 13. If compliance with any request cannot be made in full, compliance shall be made to the extent possible and shall include a written explanation of why full compliance is not possible.
 14. If the state does not expect to produce all documents responsive to a request by the date requested, the state's staff shall consult with the Committee as soon as it is known the state cannot meet the deadline, but no later than 24 hours before the due date to explain:
 - (a) what will be provided by the due date;
 - (b) why the state believes certain materials cannot be produced by the due date; and
 - (c) the state's proposed timeline for providing any omitted information.
 15. If any document responsive to this request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, or has been placed into the possession, custody, or control of any third party and cannot be provided in response to this request, you should:
 - (a) identify the document, including its date, author, subject, and recipients;
 - (b) explain the circumstances under which the document ceased to be in your possession, custody, or control, or was placed in the possession, custody, or control of a third party;
 - (c) state how the document was disposed of;
 - (d) identify the name, current address, and telephone number of the person who currently has possession, custody, or control over the document;
 - (e) state the date of disposition; and

- (f) identify the name, current address, and telephone number of each person who authorized said disposition or who had or has knowledge of said disposition.
16. If any document responsive to this request cannot be located, identify the document and describe with particularity the efforts made to locate the document and the specific reason for its disappearance, destruction, or unavailability.
17. In the event that a document or portion of a document is withheld on the basis of privilege, provide a privilege log containing the following information concerning any such document or redaction:
- (a) Bates number(s);
 - (b) the privilege asserted and the grounds therefor;
 - (c) the type of document;
 - (d) the general subject matter;
 - (e) any other description necessary to identify the document;
 - (f) the date, author, and addressee; and
 - (g) the relationship of the author and addressee to each other.

If a claimed privilege applies to only a portion of any document, that portion only should be withheld and the remainder of the document should be produced.

18. Any objections or claims of privilege are waived if you fail to provide an explanation of why full compliance is not possible and a log identifying with specificity the ground(s) for withholding each withheld document prior to the request compliance date.
19. In complying with the request, be apprised that (unless otherwise determined by the Committee) the Committee does not recognize: any purported non-disclosure privileges associated with the common law including, but not limited to, the deliberative-process privilege, the attorney-client privilege, and attorney work product protections; any purported privileges or protections from disclosure under the *Freedom of Information Act* or similar state statute; or any purported contractual privileges, such as non-disclosure agreements.
20. Any assertion by a request recipient of any such non-constitutional legal bases for withholding documents or other materials, for refusing to answer any deposition question, or for refusing to provide hearing testimony, shall be of no legal force and effect and shall not provide a justification for such withholding or refusal, unless and only to the extent that the Committee (or the chairman of the Committee, if authorized) has consented to recognize the assertion as valid.

21. If a date or other descriptive detail set forth in this request referring to a document, communication, meeting, or other event is inaccurate, but the actual date or other descriptive detail is known to you or other agency employees, or is otherwise apparent from the context of the request, you should produce all documents that would be responsive as if the date or other descriptive detail were correct.
22. The time period covered by this request is included in the attached request. To the extent a time period is not specified, produce relevant documents from January 20, 2021, to the present.
23. This request is continuing in nature and applies to any newly-discovered information. Any record, document, compilation of data, or information not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date shall be produced immediately upon subsequent location or discovery. Such submission shall include an explanation as to why the information was not produced originally.
24. If physical documents are to be delivered, two sets of documents should be delivered, one set to the Majority Staff in Room 2176 of the Rayburn House Office Building and one set to the Minority Staff in Room 2101 of the Rayburn House Office Building during Committee office hours (9am-5pm Eastern Daylight Time, unless other arrangements are made) and signed by members of the respective staffs upon delivery.
25. Upon completion of the document production, the agency's written response should include a written certification, signed by the Governor or his designee, stating that:
 - (a) a diligent search has been completed of all documents in your possession, custody, or control that reasonably could contain responsive documents; and
 - (b) all documents located during the search that are responsive have been produced to the Committee.

Definitions

1. The term "document" means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, expense reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, working papers, records, notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, inter-office and intra-office communications, electronic mail (e-mail), contracts, cables, notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, meeting or other communication, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary

versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs, microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings, and motion pictures), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, disks, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape, or otherwise. A document bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate document. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.

2. The term “documents in your possession, custody or control” means documents that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employees, or representatives acting on your behalf; documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy, or to which you have access; and/or documents that have been placed in the possession, custody, or control of any third party.
3. The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document, or otherwise, and whether in a meeting, by telephone, facsimile, email, regular mail, telexes, releases, or otherwise.
4. The terms “and” and “or” shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this request any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The singular includes plural number, and vice versa. The masculine includes the feminine and neuter genders.
5. The terms “person” or “persons” mean natural persons, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations, subsidiaries, divisions, departments, joint ventures, proprietorships, syndicates, or other legal, business or government entities, and all subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, departments, branches, or other units thereof.
6. The term “identify,” when used in a question about individuals, means to provide the following information: (a) the individual’s complete name and title; and (b) the individual’s business address and phone number.
7. The term “referring or relating,” with respect to any given subject, means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, reflects, identifies, states, refers to, deals with, or is pertinent to that subject in any manner whatsoever.
8. The term “state” means any department, agency, sub-agency of the State of Maryland.
9. The term “privilege” includes, but is not limited to, any claim that a document either may or must be withheld from production pursuant to any statute, rule, or regulation.

10. The term “employee” means agent, borrowed employee, casual employee, consultant, de facto employee, joint adventurer, loaned employee, part-time employee, permanent employee, provisional employee, contract employee, contractor, or any other type of service provider.
11. “You” or “your” means and refers to you as a natural person and the State of Maryland and any of its agencies, offices, subdivisions, entities, officials, administrators, employees, attorneys, agents, advisors, consultants, staff, contractors, or any other persons acting on your behalf or under your control or direction; and includes any other person(s) defined in the document request letter.