



AGC
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September 2026

Build America's Construction Workforce



Construction workforce shortages increase costs and delay critical projects. Ninety-two percent of hiring construction firms report difficulty finding qualified workers, and 45 percent report project delays caused by workforce shortages. Congress should pursue two complementary policies: provide a lawful, temporary source of workers to address immediate needs and rebuild the nation's domestic construction education pipeline.

- **Support H.R. 5494 to Establish a Visa Program for Year-Round Construction Occupations.** Current immigration law does not address the construction industry's year-round workforce needs. The H-2B program is limited to temporary and seasonal positions, while most construction occupations are excluded from other employment-based visa programs. H-1B visas primarily serve highly specialized occupations, and H-2A visas are limited to agricultural work. As a result, contractors have virtually no lawful way to supplement the domestic workforce when qualified American workers are unavailable.
 - The Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act, or H.R. 5494, would establish a lawful, temporary, traceable, and taxable visa program. Employers would first have to demonstrate positions remain, recruit Americans, and pay prevailing wages. Participation would be limited to areas with low unemployment. The program would provide responsible, short-term relief while investments are made in domestic construction education and training.
- **Increase Federal Funding for Career and Technical Education.** Career and technical education is the long-term solution to construction workforce shortages. Perkins CTE funding is \$1.44 billion annually. Federal CTE funding has failed to keep pace with inflation and workforce demand.
 - Additional funding would help schools expand construction-focused programs, modernize equipment and curricula, recruit and retain qualified instructors, and align training with local construction demand.
 - Federal education investments remain heavily tilted toward traditional four-year degrees. 80 percent of federal postsecondary education funding supports traditional degree programs, even though only 38 percent of Americans complete a four-year degree.

ACTION NEEDED

1. Support H.R. 5494, the Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act
2. Increase Perkins CTE funding in the FY27 Labor-HHS appropriations bill