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LEGAL RIGHTS



By Atty. Johnson Lazaro

AMERICA needs foreign workers. And you don't have to look very far to confirm this. Just last week the California Republican Party decided that it cannot find a qualified American worker for the crucial position of state deputy political director. And so like so many other U.S. companies it hired a foreigner. Christopher Matthews from Canada was hired for the position. This move greatly undermines the argument by many Republicans that foreign workers steal jobs from Americans.

The Canadian applied for an H-1B visa. This is a very common nonimmigrant work visa that is highly-coveted by foreign talents. In Manila alone, our office takes frequent calls from highly-talented specialized workers looking for work in the U.S. Accountants, ITs, financial and software analysts, and computer professionals are H-1B visa eligible.

The H-1B holder is given

No Qualified American Worker

an initial three years of stay and is renewable for another three years. This is the visa category that Congress severely slashed in numbers several years ago. There used to be approximately 220,000 of these visas available worldwide. However, in the last three years, immigration just issued 65,000 annually. As a consequence, hundreds of well-qualified workers are left out each year and the application backlog continues to grow.

Many Silicon Valley tech firms have been dependent on the H-1B visa for many years. But the cutback in numbers have severely affected the flow of foreign workers. The demand for H-1B has become so enormous that Immigration started accepting applications for 2008 on April 1, 2007 and the visas were all taken two days later.

So why is the hiring of a foreigner to a prominent state GOP post such a big deal? Well for one thing, it goes back to the face of many Republicans who argue that Asians and Mexicans drain the economy. They argue that foreigners take the jobs that belong to Americans. Many

Republicans have painted Asians and Mexicans as the "brown menace," coming to America to take jobs. Let's hope that the rhetoric stops and Congress conducts a realistic assessment of America's immigration needs.

It appears that Congress has heard the cries of many Silicon Valley executives as well as many high tech companies across the U.S. H-1B visas are to increase if the reform bill passes. This is good news for many talented and highly-skilled Filipinos waiting to contribute to the American economy.

Atty. Johnson Lazaro represents immigrants in all Federal Courts in the United States. Lazaro and Associates specializes in difficult immigration cases as well as business immigration and family visa petitions. The firm's offices are located in San Francisco and Fremont/Newark/Union City in California, and Makati City (Philippines), with tel. no. (415) 278-9577, e-mail at Law@LazaroLaw.com, and website at www.LazaroLaw.com. This article should not be taken as legal advice for any individual case or situation. The information is intended to be general and should not be relied upon for any specific situation. This is not meant to create a lawyer-client relationship.

(Advertising Supplement)

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