

Memo

Representative Dick Stein
May 11, 2020
Sponsor Testimony HB495

Chair Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety committee, thank you for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on HB 495. This legislation changes one word in revised code to extend the registration period of commercial farm buses used exclusively for the transportation of migratory farm labor.

Many farm operations employ H2A guest labor. H2A visas can be valid from two to ten months. The use of H2A labor requires much of these employers—providing Adverse Effect Wage Rate a prevailing wage, housing during their stay, and transportation to and from the border.

A group of farmers from the Willard muck area approached me this spring with a problem. Each year, they employ upwards of 1000 H2A guest laborers for the entire grow season. Due to scale, they have invested in their own buses and drivers to make the journeys. Ohio law provides a special registration for buses used exclusively for this purpose limited to 210 days. As federal policy approves longer stays of H2A labor, prevailing Ohio law requires farmers to seek alternative travel arrangements for labor kept longer than 210 days.

An extension to 310 days will allow H2A labor to return on the same bus they arrived. The duration will cover the maximum allowable stay and give a buffer for the driver to arrive and return the vehicle.

I am happy to answer questions the committee may have at this time. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Dick Stein