

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 28**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Introduced: 3/10/26

Referred: Labor & Commerce

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Recognizing the vital role of workers serving in the state under the J-1 Exchange Visitor**  
2 **Program and the H-1B Program for specialty occupations in supporting the state's**  
3 **economic security and continuity of critical services.**

4 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 **WHEREAS** the state's economic security depends on maintaining a lawful, reliable  
6 workforce pipeline that can meet sharp seasonal peaks and specialized staffing needs across a  
7 vast geography with many small and remote labor markets; and

8 **WHEREAS** the state experiences the nation's largest seasonal employment swing,  
9 with the gap between the lowest and highest employment months reaching about 14 percent,  
10 or roughly 43,900 jobs, primarily driven by tourism, seafood processing, and construction;  
11 and

12 **WHEREAS** the Department of Labor and Workforce Development reports that  
13 visitor-related industries employed 68,386 workers in 2024, reflecting staffing needs that  
14 surge during the summer tourism season and require timely access to lawful temporary work  
15 authorizations; and

1           **WHEREAS** within the tourism industry, accommodations and scenic and sightseeing  
2 transportation are among the most seasonal components of the industry, and the department  
3 reports that these industries draw a large share of workers from outside the state during peak  
4 season; and

5           **WHEREAS** seafood processing is one of the state's most seasonal and geographically  
6 dispersed industries and employed 18,841 in 2024, including 9,541 seafood processing  
7 workers and 3,818 meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers; and

8           **WHEREAS** the department estimates that in 2024 workers from outside the state  
9 made up 49 percent of the state's fish harvesting workforce and received 57 percent of gross  
10 harvesting earnings, demonstrating the scale of labor mobility required to support the state's  
11 fisheries economy and its associated support industries; and

12           **WHEREAS** the state's health care sector is a foundational part of the state's economy,  
13 supporting more than 46,000 annual average jobs in 2024, representing about 11 percent of  
14 statewide employment, and generating about \$3,700,000,000 in direct wages, accounting for  
15 about 13 percent of total workforce earnings, with a total economic footprint of roughly  
16 78,400 jobs and \$5,400,000,000 in income when multiplier effects are included; and

17           **WHEREAS** the state's current supply of health care workers does not meet demand,  
18 and employers must hire approximately 9,943 new health care workers statewide each year to  
19 address turnover and support growth; and

20           **WHEREAS** federal law provides targeted, regulated, temporary visa pathways that  
21 support employers and institutions in the state that conduct good-faith domestic recruitment  
22 and yet continue to face vacancies, including the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program and the H-1B  
23 program for specialty occupations; and

24           **WHEREAS** these programs serve distinct public purposes, including cultural  
25 exchange and training under the J-1 program and specialized, degree-related occupations  
26 under the H-1B program, and employers in the state rely on these pathways to maintain  
27 continuity of critical services and meet seasonal staffing needs consistent with federal  
28 safeguards; and

29           **WHEREAS** on September 19, 2025, President Trump issued a proclamation  
30 restricting entry of certain H-1B nonimmigrants unless the petition is accompanied or  
31 supplemented by a payment of \$100,000; and

1           **WHEREAS** a \$100,000 per-worker payment requirement effectively prohibits most  
2 employers in the state from hiring H-1B workers, including rural hospitals and clinics,  
3 seafood processors, tourism businesses, local governments, schools, and contractors, by  
4 imposing a cost that cannot be realistically absorbed;

5           **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes and supports the  
6 lawful contributions of workers serving in the state under the J-1 and H-1B visa programs and  
7 the role these programs play in the state's economic security and the continuity of critical  
8 services and seasonal industries; and be it

9           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages employers,  
10 health systems, educational institutions, and community partners in tourism-related industries,  
11 seafood processing and fishing support, health care, education, transportation, engineering,  
12 and other critical sectors to continue using available federal programs to recruit and retain  
13 qualified workers when positions remain vacant after conducting good-faith domestic  
14 recruitment and using those programs in full compliance with applicable wage, worker-  
15 protection, and program-integrity requirements; and be it

16           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the members of the  
17 Alaska delegation in Congress and other federal policymakers to preserve and strengthen  
18 workable J-1 and H-1B pathways that support the state's unique workforce needs, including  
19 improvements to processing times, reductions in avoidable administrative disruptions, support  
20 for predictable season-to-season staffing continuity where permitted by law, and prioritization  
21 of national-interest considerations for critical and rural services; and be it

22           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature reaffirms its commitment  
23 to fostering an economy and public service system that enable qualified workers who are  
24 legally authorized to work are able to contribute to communities in the state and to the state's  
25 long-term prosperity.

26           **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President  
27 of the United States; the Honorable JD Vance, Vice President of the United States and  
28 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Kristi Noem, United States Secretary of  
29 Homeland Security; the Honorable Marco Rubio, United States Secretary of State; and the  
30 Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the  
31 Honorable Nicholas Begich, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in

1 Congress.