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A Note from the Editor

Jobs Americans Won't Do?

In February, American businesses cut over 308,000 jobs, adding to the more than 380,000 private-sector positions and half-million manufacturing jobs lost last year. According to the Department of Labor, for white-collar professionals, the unemployment rate stands at 8.9%. Observed Richard Yamarone, an economist with Argus Research Corp: "The labor market situation has deteriorated dramatically and is weighing heavily on consumer confidence and spending."

Despite the ready availability of tens of thousands of laid-off professionals, and additional thousands of highly-trained recent college graduates, state and federal government agencies from coast to coast have hired foreign workers at the expense of American citizens, using the controversial H-1B visa program.

Federal agencies that have hired H-1B non-citizen workers include: Argonne National Laboratory, U. S. Department of Defense, Department of the Air Force, Department of the Navy, Department of Veterans Affairs, U. S. Department of Agriculture, U. S. Naval Academy, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the Los Alamos National Laboratories.

State governments using public money to retain foreign nationals at a time when large numbers of qualified Americans are seeking employment include: the Arizona Department of Transportation, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, California Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety, Indiana Department of Transportation, Louisiana Department of Public Safety, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Minnesota Department of Transportation, New Jersey Department of Transportation, New York Public Library, Tennessee Department of Transportation, and the Virginia Department of Corrections.

Under Republican Governor Jeb Bush, the state of Florida has been a prominent employer of H-1B visa holders. The Florida Department of Corrections, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Health, and Florida Department of Transportation are among the state agencies that have hired foreign professionals.

The state of Ohio, led by Republican Governor Bob Taft, presents a case study of the types of good jobs going to foreigners instead of Americans. At least eight Ohio state agencies have hired H-1B workers, most of them citizens of India and the Pacific Rim countries of China, Korea, and Taiwan. The Ohio Department of Job & Family Services has hired a number of foreign computer programmers and analysts, at starting salaries ranging from \$50,336 to over \$64,000.

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Jobs Americans Won't Do?

Examples of Ohio State Jobs Filled by Foreigners

Agency	Job Title	Yr Salary
Administrative Services	computer programmer	\$52,873
Administrative Services	systems analyst	\$52,873
Agriculture	pest control specialist	\$31,990
Health	epidemiology investigator	\$50,336
Health	computer programmer	\$45,801
Health	researcher	\$41,600
Job & Family Services	programmer/analyst	\$55,411
Job & Family Services	programmer/analyst	\$58,156
Job & Family Services	programmer/analyst	\$50,336
Job & Family Services	programmer/analyst	\$52,873
Job & Family Services	programmer/analyst	\$64,043
Mental Health	programmer/analyst	\$48,027
Mental Health	psychiatrist	\$114,920
Mental Health	psychiatrist	\$133,036
Mental Health	psychiatrist	\$136,323
Mental Retardation	systems analyst	\$52,873
Rehabilitation/Corrections	psychiatrist	\$131,580
Rehabilitation Services	claims adjudicator	\$31,990

Source: Ohio State Agencies

When asked why his department hires foreign citizens for well-paying jobs, the Director of Job & Family Services, Tom Hayes, replied, "We here believe in the American dream...but we can't say that we have to hire people who are American citizens."

The H-1B visa program, a provision of the 1990 Immigration Act, was created to allow American companies to hire foreign professionals at a time when the high-tech industry cried that a huge labor shortage was looming. Although the shortage never materialized, Congress has expanded the program from an initial 65,000 temporary visas, good for up to six years, to 115,000 visas in 1999, to 195,000 foreign workers admitted annually through this year.

Under the H-1B program, employers are not required to document a shortage of qualified Americans for a particular job opening. They do have to file an application fee of \$1,000 per employee, which is simply written off as a cost of doing business. In the case of government agencies, American tax dollars pay the fees used to hire foreign workers.

Corporations and government agencies like to hire foreigners, since they are often compliant, and private

companies can offer them lower wages and fewer benefits than Americans would expect for similar work. The pay-off for foreign workers is that they receive higher pay in the United States than they would at home, and employers often sponsor them for permanent residence. For hundreds of thousands of non-citizens, the H-1B program has become a backdoor entry into America.

The H-1B program is not the only way that non-citizens can work legally in the United States. Jessica Vaughan, a senior policy analyst with the Center for Immigration Studies, discovered that more than 715,000 foreigners were issued employment visas in 2001 (the most recent figures available). Another 110,000 non-immigrants received permission to work after they arrived in the United States.

Congress has the authority to end these practices. H-1B comes up for review and renewal of the higher visa limits later this year. The various non-immigrant work visa programs can simply be terminated. But the public has yet to make this a pressing issue.

More information about foreign employment visa programs (H-1B and L-1) can be found at some of the

websites (CIS, NumbersUSA.com, FAIR) listed on our bulletin board on the following page (152). A site devoted to this issue is www.zazona.com, which includes a database listing companies that hire foreigners for American jobs.

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Edward Abbey once described support for endless economic growth as “the economics of the cancer cell.” Yet the assumption that economic growth is the

wellspring of human progress is a belief endorsed by all shades of opinion. In this issue, we are pleased to present the contrarian views of Professor Herman Daly of the University of Maryland. We thank guest editor John Attarian for preparing this special feature. If nature is to survive, the global economy will have to stop growing.

WAYNE LUTTON, PH.D.

Editor