

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 3, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Secretary
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Joseph Edlow
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
5900 Capital Gateway Dr.
Camp Springs, MD 20746

The Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, Director Edlow, and Attorney General Bondi:

I write regarding a concerning trend in the technology and banking sectors: companies are increasingly hiring foreign workers on temporary H-1B visas while simultaneously laying off American workers. High-skilled immigration programs, when designed, implemented, and enforced appropriately, spur economic growth that creates good-paying jobs for American workers. At the same time, we must ensure such programs are not used to undercut or replace U.S. employees, especially as the American dream continues to grow further out of reach for young people. Therefore, I request that you strengthen oversight of large corporations' use of H-1B visas.

Over the last several years, large technology corporations have laid off hundreds of thousands of workers.¹ In fiscal year 2025, these same companies were approved to hire over 30,000 foreign H-1B workers.² Such trends are concerning given the high unemployment rate for American tech workers,³ particularly recent graduates. At major public technology companies, employees between the ages of 21 and 25 made up 15 percent of the workforce in January 2023. By July 2025, that number had dropped to 6.7 percent.⁴ These statistics suggest that there are young American workers eager to be trained for and to fill these roles.

Gen Z workers are struggling elsewhere in our economy too. According to a recent Bank of America Institute report, over 13 percent of unemployed Americans in July were new entrants into the workforce or jobseekers with no prior work experience, who tend to be Gen Z. That

¹ "Tech Layoffs Tracker," TrueUp, <https://www.trueup.io/layoffs>.

² "H-1B Employer Data Hub," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, June 30, 2025, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-and-studies/h-1b-employer-data-hub>.

³ "Labor Market Outcomes of College Graduates by Major," Federal Reserve Bank of New York, February 20, 2025, <https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market#--:explore=outcomes-by-major>.

⁴ Alex Daniel, "Gen Z workers are getting axed at tech companies — and fast," Quartz, September 8, 2025, <https://qz.com/gen-z-workers-cut-at-tech-companies-fast>.

number represents the highest percentage since 1988, according to the Richmond Federal Reserve. Additionally, the report notes that while the overall unemployment rate has remained relatively flat, the unemployment rate for young workers has continued to climb, reaching 7.4 percent in June.⁵ This trend is particularly concerning because the American dream has become unachievable for most young people. For example, the average student borrows over \$30,000 to pursue a bachelor's degree.⁶ But even this is no longer enough; since the start of 2020, the median home price has risen 55.7 percent, while average wages have only increased 26.6 percent.⁷ Moreover, a new report shows that childcare for one infant now costs more than rent in 17 states and more than in-state college tuition in 38 states.⁸

The intent of the H-1B visa program is to grow the economy and supplement the U.S. workforce—not replace it. Given the number of unemployed American college graduates with relevant degrees and skills, the fact that corporations are laying off American workers while simultaneously hiring foreign H-1B workers raises important questions.

In September, the Department of Labor launched Project Firewall as part of a multi-agency effort to strengthen H-1B enforcement.⁹ To ensure the administration follows through on its commitment to protect American workers, we request answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do you plan to increase the number of investigations into H-1B fraud and abuse?
2. How will you prioritize which companies to investigate?
3. Will you pay special attention to the companies that have laid off American workers while filing petitions for H-1B workers?
4. How will you ensure companies make good faith efforts to fulfill all H-1B requirements, including those requiring prioritization of U.S. workers over H-1B employees?
5. The press release announcing Project Firewall states the Secretary of Labor will personally certify the initiation of investigations.¹⁰ How will you ensure this personal certification requirement does not needlessly add red tape, enable corruption or pay-to-play, or hamper the visa program's overall objectives?

⁵ Taylor Bowley, "Job hoppers hit pause," Bank of America Institute, August 22, 2025, <https://institute.bankofamerica.com/content/dam/economic-insights/labor-market.pdf>.

⁶ Melanie Hanson, "Average Student Loan Debt," Education Data Initiative, August 15, 2025, <https://educationdata.org/average-student-loan-debt>.

⁷ "U.S. Home Affordability Worsens in Q2 2025 as Prices and Costs Outpace Wages," Bluefield Realty Group, July 2, 2025, <https://www.bluefieldgroup.com/blog/us-home-affordability-worsens-in-q2-2025-as-prices-and-costs-outpace-wages/#:~:text=Rising%20Home%20Costs%20Continue%20to%20Outpace%20Wage%20Growth&text=Meanwhile%20C%20typical%20wages%20are%20barely,the%20Bureau%20of%20Labor%20Statistics>.

⁸ "The Rising Cost of Childcare," NPR, March 20, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/20/1239646560/the-rising-cost-of-childcare>.

⁹ "US Department of Labor Launches Project Firewall to Protect America's Highly Skilled Workforce," U.S. Department of Labor, September 19, 2025, <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osec/osec20250919>.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

6. In executing this multi-agency oversight effort, how will you ensure other important missions are not negatively impacted?

We must ensure that corporations using H-1B visas honor the intent of the program and do not displace American workers. In doing so, we can provide economic opportunity for young Americans to achieve the American dream.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ruben Gallego". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first letter "R" is large and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left. The name "Gallego" follows in a similar cursive script.

Ruben Gallego
United States Senator