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March 11, 2008

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VIA FACSIMILE – 202-693-6111

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room S-2018
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to you regarding news reports that over 100 guest workers in the U.S. Department of Labor's H-2B program quit their jobs last week in protest over substandard working and living conditions at the Signal International shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi. These guest workers allege that they are victims of human trafficking. According to the news accounts, the Signal H-2B workers each paid up to \$20,000 (U.S. dollars) in their native India to a labor recruiting company called Dewan Consultants, which allegedly promised the workers green cards and permanent residency in the United States through the guest worker program.

As you know, I have sponsored legislation, H.R. 1763, to address the unjust treatment of guest workers by labor recruiters and employers, including provisions for the prohibition of recruitment fees and the imposition of civil and criminal penalties on violators. I have also made clear my position that guest worker programs generally and the H-2B program in particular are in need of both strengthened labor protections for U.S. and foreign workers and greater labor law enforcement. As part of my Committee's ongoing oversight of these programs, please provide me with the following information:

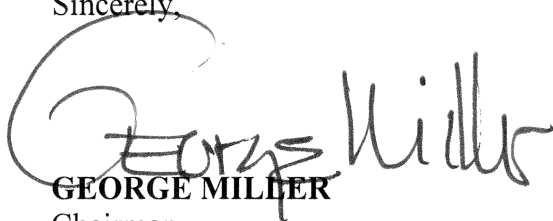
- According to a news story in last Friday's *Mississippi Press*, the DOL inspected the Signal International shipyard last year. Please confirm whether any such inspections occurred, and if so, provide my Education and Labor Committee staff with a copy of all reports or documentation that stemmed from those inspections. Given the DOL's contention that it does not currently have the legal authority to enforce the terms of H-2B contracts, please confirm the scope of that investigation, e.g., whether it included an examination of compliance with contract terms or with representations made in the H-2B certification process.

Secretary Chao
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- Please provide all H-2B guest worker applications and certifications for the past five years – including all supporting documents and correspondence submitted to the relevant State Workforce Agency or U.S. Department of Labor – for Signal International, Dewan Consultants, Five Star Contractors, LLC., Knights Marine and Industrial Services, Inc., Eagle Staffing (may also be listed as Eagle Companies or Eagle Industrial Professional Services), Massey Contracting, Inc., S Mansour & Company, and North American Labor Service, Inc.

Questions about this request should be directed to Committee staff, Tico Almeida, at (202) 225-3725. Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "G".

GEORGE MILLER

Chairman

Committee on Education and Labor