

# Save our economy with sensible immigration reform

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Inflation and interest rates have reached record highs. Crops are rotting in the fields and employers are desperate to find employees. What is the solution to these pressing problems? Sensible immigration reform.

The Federal Reserve can only raise the interest rate so high before throwing the economy into a recession. The real underlying problem is a major shortage of workers. Currently, there are two jobs available for every unemployed worker. Even though employers have raised wages and offered signing bonuses, there are still help wanted signs in almost every store and restaurant, and restaurants have been forced to cut back hours of operation. Farmers have let their fields fallow and left crops to rot. The best way to solve this supply and demand issue is by allowing more willing workers into the US and legalizing undocumented workers who are already here.

Republican Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Democratic Senator Krystan Sinema of Arizona have agreed upon a bipartisan framework for immigration reform, which they will try to pass during the lame duck session of Congress - the period after the midterms and before the new Congress is installed in January.

The main points of the proposed legislation are: a pathway for citizenship for the so called "dreamers," the beneficiaries of the DACA legislation passed in 2012 for undocumented immigrants who were brought to the US as children; legalization for some farm workers to meet the current shortages; legalization of other essential workers and between \$25 to \$40 billion dollars to bolster border security. The extra funding could also be used to raise salaries of border patrol officers and to build more processing facilities.

Significantly, the Tillis-Sinema immigration compromise also calls for a one-year continuation of Title 42, which is set to expire this year. Title 42 is a controversial rule that allows immigration to deny entrance to asylum seekers for health reasons. It is set to expire shortly, unless Congress acts.

As always, the devil is in the details. Sixty votes are required to overcome a filibuster. Democrats will also need to garner at least some Republican support if the bill is to pass before the new GOP-controlled Congress takes office, or face having to put the issue on hold until at least 2024.

Still, the outlook is not good. A bipartisan coalition has been trying to pass some type of immigration reform for years, including during the Obama, Trump and Biden Administrations - each time with no success. In order to achieve the goal of a pathway for citizenship for the "dreamers," both parties will need to compromise.