



SUPPORT EDUCATE ADVOCATE

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NJRHA.org

August 29, 2017

Honorable Christopher Christie  
Office of the Governor  
125 West State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08608

Dear Governor Christie:

On behalf of the members of the New Jersey Restaurant and Hospitality Association, I am writing to you today asking for your support to save the Department of State managed J-1 Visa, Summer Work Travel program for international exchange students. President Trump's Administration intends to dramatically reduce or even eliminate this program, possibly as early as September.

The Summer Work Travel (SWT) program is tremendously important to New Jersey's tourism industry and without it, many businesses would be forced to reduce hours of operation, face shutdowns in part of businesses, and ultimately lay off year-round American employees due to lost revenues. Simply stated, the elimination of the SWT would drastically and negatively impact New Jersey's \$44.1 billion industry which employs over 500,000 residents of our state.

SWT is a public diplomacy program managed by the Department of State that allows foreign college students an American Experience. Students visit the United States during their summer break and work for 10 weeks alongside Americans, improving their English-speaking abilities, learning about American culture, and establishing lifelong friendships. These students are critically needed employees who supplement local hiring in areas where job demands swell beyond what local residents can fill. SWT is not a threat to President Trump's Buy American and Hire American policy as it does not displace American workers.

These exchange students benefit our communities in other ways as well. It is estimated that the average student spends up to \$5,300 while here. With nearly 5,600 students in New Jersey during the course of a year, we realize a \$30 million economic benefit from their housing, food, and shopping expenses.

On behalf of New Jersey's tourism industry, we implore you to contact President Trump today in support of the J-1 Visa, Summer Work Travel program in an effort to protect this valuable piece of our state's third largest industry.

Sincerely,

Marilou Halvorsen  
*President*

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