

Rep. Santana offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 316.

A resolution to memorialize the President and Congress of the United States to support Michigan's request for 50,000 EB-2 visas to assist in the economic recovery of the city of Detroit.

Whereas, Professionals with advanced skills in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) are crucial to the continued development of our economy. However, Michigan continues to suffer from a shortage of workers with advanced training in STEM-related skills, and this shortage is expected to worsen over the coming years with STEM-related occupations growing 1.7 times the rate of non-STEM-related occupations. By 2018, Michigan is estimated to have 274,000 more STEM-related positions available than professionals to fill them. While we are committed to increasing STEM proficiency in our own students, Michigan must also seek out and retain professionals with advanced degrees to help build our economy now; and

Whereas, The city of Detroit has a special need for skilled professionals to help rebuild, revitalize, and reinvigorate the city. In recent years, Detroit, an iconic American city, has seen an unprecedented decline in population, and the loss of local revenue has made it difficult for the city to meet its financial obligations. Recruiting skilled professionals is one step toward achieving economic recovery and relieving the city's acute unemployment. In addition to adding a valuable new dynamic to the local economy, with their employment comes new consumers, increasing demand, and job growth in other sectors; and

Whereas, Allowing immigrants to fill vacant STEM positions would provide an economic boost to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. Through the recruitment and retention of foreign-born professionals, targeted immigration can help quench the unmet demands of Michigan's labor market—avoiding the suppression of economic production and growth that results—and help fortify the long-term health of its economy. Immigrants working in the United States also leverage their skills to contribute to the American economy rather than increasing the productivity and value of another nation's economy; and

Whereas, Federal employment-based visa programs, particularly the EB-2 program, grant foreign-born professionals legal working status in the United States. Designed for individuals with advanced degrees or its equivalent, the EB-2 program permits foreign-born professionals with STEM-related or business skills to be employed with domestic businesses, businesses otherwise unable to fill these jobs with the existing labor market. This program also encourages immigrants with exceptional abilities—abilities in science, art, or business that are significantly above those of ordinary workers in the field—to obtain an EB-2 visa; and

Whereas, The state of Michigan has requested a pilot program be instituted to reallocate 50,000 EB-2 visas over the next five years for use in the city of Detroit. As proposed, 5,000 visas would be made available to foreign-born professionals the first year, 10,000 visas for the next three years, and 15,000 visas would be available in the fifth year. Rather than taking from the national pool of annually-available EB-2 visas, the administration would reallocate any unused EB-1, EB-2, EB-3, and family-based preference visas into the EB-2 pilot program, making them available for employment opportunities in the city of Detroit; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the President and Congress of the United States to support Michigan's request for 50,000 EB-2 visas to assist in the economic recovery of the city of Detroit; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Chairman and Ranking Member of the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Chairman and Ranking Member of the United States House Committee on the Judiciary, Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.