

A Look At An Immigrant's Impact On Tennessee

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In Tennessee immigrants make up about 5 percent of the population. Numbers released by the New American Economy Tuesday show just how that number impacts others.

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - In Tennessee, immigrants make up about 5 percent of the population. [Numbers released](#) by the [New American Economy](#) have shown just how that number impacts others.

"Immigrants make up 15 percent of Nashville's tourism, hospitality and recreation industries. More than 20 percent of the construction industry has jobs that are filled by immigrants and both of those are critical in maintaining our prosperity and momentum as we move into the future," said Ralph Schulz with the Nashville Chamber of Commerce.

Many of the men who planned to speak to lawmakers Tuesday are immigrants themselves including Councilman Fabian Bedne.

"This is what you get with an immigrant, you get somebody who is in love, passionate about what we have here, about our democracy, about our system of rights," Bedne said.

That's why they've spoken with lawmakers about immigration reform.

"We need to be able to hire more immigrant workers, and our immigration system in this nation is not working for us," Stefan Maupin with the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation said.

The farming industry relies heavily on immigrants. From 2002 to 2014, the number of U.S. farm workers declined by more than 20 percent. They'd like to see reformed laws which will make it easier to fill those positions with those who are foreign born.

"We also think food security should play into it and our food security and supply in this country would be at risk without the immigrants who help plant and harvest it," Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation President Jeff Aiken said.

As a nation built on immigrants in what many consider uncertain times, one idea continued to ring true. "Let's ask ourselves less what we each should get. Let's ask more what we together can do for America." Dr. Ming Wang

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