

https://www.postguam.com/news/local/trump-affiliated-recruiter-wants-to-bring-mexican-workers-to-guam/article_fg9c2c7e2-6fca-11e9-8932-c32520514591.html

Trump-affiliated recruiter wants to bring Mexican workers to Guam

LANNIE WALKER | THE GUAM DAILY POST

12 HRS AGO



'LEGAL OPTIONS': Veronica Birkenstock, president of Practical Employee Solutions, meets with Guam Department of Lab Director David Dell'Isola on Monday and discussed Mexico as a possible source of labor for Guam. Lannie Walker/The Guam Daily Post

MORE INFORMATION



RECRUIT WORKERS FROM FIJI, FORUM SPEAKER PROPOSES

The owner of a Texas manpower agency with ties to President Donald Trump's businesses encouraged local labor officials to source workers from Mexico, which is one of the countries on the H-2B approved list.

After the removal of the Philippines by the Department of Homeland Security from the list in January, Guam has scrambled to find ways to bring in the needed labor for the military buildup on the island.

Although Guam can still petition for H-2B workers from the Philippines under the National Defense Authorization Act, the process is "volatile" and takes a great amount of "delay, time and effort," Guam Department of Labor Director David Dell'Isola said.

Veronica Birkenstock, president and CEO of Practical Employee Solutions, said her company can "fix" Guam's labor problems by helping contractors bring in workers from countries other than the Philippines. She said Mexico is Guam's best bet to fill the gap.

Birkenstock met with GDOL officials on Monday. She first visited Guam in 2009 looking to do business on the island and said she has kept abreast of the workforce situation locally during the past decade.

Practical Solutions will bring 7,000 foreign workers into the country this year, Birkenstock said.

Trump-affiliated properties have employed workers brought to the United States by Birkenstock's company.

"I do file for Trump properties. All the hotels, and the golf courses and the vineyards do participate," she said.

"President Trump has defended the program. He understands that when you can't find sufficient U.S. workers there should be legal options."

The program could make it possible for Guam to bring in workers faster and at a comparable cost to bring in workers from the Philippines, Birkenstock said. She said as soon as employers have the approved certifications, the company could have workers here within 14 to 21 days.

She said 7,500 workers from Mexico are available to come to Guam and work.

While travel cost from Mexico will be higher than from the Philippines, employers would not have to pay fees charged by The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration resulting in "close to a wash" in overall cost, Dell'Isola said.

Birkenstock said her company has negotiated group airfare rates in the past with certain airlines.

With the labor needs for the military buildup on Guam, Birkenstock said, "It's a business opportunity for me but it's important for our country that this happens and you can't do it without a workforce."