



For Immediate Release

ACCJ Releases Viewpoint:

“Revise Japan’s Immigration Laws to Allow Hiring of Foreign Domestic Workers/“Nannies” to Support Japanese Women’s Participation in the Workforce”

– FDW Model from Overseas to Help Unleash Japanese Women in Workforce as Engines for Economic Growth –

June 13, 2013 – The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) today issued a Viewpoint which calls on the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Government of Japan led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to implement a foreign domestic worker (FDW) program to facilitate the participation of Japanese women in the workforce.

The ACCJ recommends that Japanese law and regulations be amended to (1) allow Japanese citizens and permanent residents to sponsor foreign domestic help, on the basis that the sponsor can show that the household in question earns a combined household income of over seven million yen; (2) permit domestic workers to work for multiple families, including those of Japanese and permanent Residents; (3) grant permanent residents and single Japanese citizens eligibility to sponsor foreign domestic help for elderly care, if they earn an annual income of over seven million yen.

The Chair of the ACCJ's Labor Diversification Task Force, Bryan A. Norton said, “Japan is facing an inevitable demographic crisis due to a rapidly aging society and a shrinking birthrate. By 2060, the total population is expected to fall to about 87 million people, and 40% of those people will be elderly. The workforce will also fall from 64% of the total population today to 51%. By raising Japan’s relatively low female employment rate of 60% to match its male employment rate of 80%, Japan could increase its workforce by 8.2 million people and raise its GDP by 15%. We ask the Japanese government to create an FDW program to help Japanese women re-enter the workforce and contribute to Japan’s economic productivity.”

“Also in terms of attracting the best talent from abroad, Japan needs to be aware that many highly skilled workers will be bringing their families with them. Efforts to attract highly skilled foreigners to Japan must include support for foreign women to allow them to raise their families as free of stress as possible,” Mr. Norton added.

Kumi Sato, Vice-Chair of the Labor Diversification Task Force, also noted, “The Japanese government has the opportunity to increase participation of working women through relaxing its current immigration policy towards foreign domestic workers. In order to increase female employment, the issues of insufficient staffing and facilities for child care and elderly care must be addressed. Immigration policies need to be revised to allow greater flexibility in the hiring of foreigners as domestic workers, in order to provide women with another option for child care resources. As proven by other countries that utilize foreign domestic worker programs—such as Singapore and Hong Kong—expanding the availability of domestic helpers could greatly relieve many of the domestic burdens that make it difficult for women to work.”

The full Viewpoint is available on the ACCJ website at:
< http://www.accj.or.jp/images/130613_Revise_Japans_LFD.pdf >

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About ACCJ

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) was established in 1948 by representatives of 40 American companies and has grown into one of the most influential business organizations in Japan. Consisting mainly of executives from American companies, the ACCJ has members representing over 1,000 companies with offices in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka. Working closely with the governments of the United States and Japan and other business organizations, the ACCJ promotes trade and investment flows between the United States and Japan, promoting the interests of U.S. companies and members, and improving the environment for international business in Japan. Over 60 committees representing various industries play a central role in making ACCJ policy recommendations by issuing Viewpoints, Public Comments and White Papers and holding over 500 events and seminars annually on public policy and economic trends. The ACCJ also undertakes charitable efforts and supports its members' CSR activities.

PRESS CONTACT: ACCJ External Affairs (phone: 03 3433 6542; email: external@accj.or.jp).