

QSS20S1 Final Project Memo 1

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1 What I learned

There were many interesting aspects of the GAO report. One of the biggest things I learned was the variety of types of abuse that workers could face, including visa fraud, wage fraud, recruitment fees and fraud, trafficking, and more. It is worth investigating that experiencing abuse increases the likelihood of later tolerance of abuse, which could be one lens to explore. Furthermore, one of the biggest impediments to protecting one's self against abuse is not receiving adequate information about the job beforehand. It seems as though one of the biggest roadblocks is that much of the information is divided up between the main agencies (DOL, DOJ, DHS, USCIS, etc.) and is not public or not shared between agencies. This sharing of information could make things like finding disbarred employers reapplying easier. Although the most common form of abuse seems to be related to payment, the GAO report is interested in investigating human trafficking abuses, despite the lack of data. However, the GAO report was not just relying on "data" in terms of number of reports, but also had testimonial data from interviews with many workers, which gave them further insights into the reality of workplace abuse for visa holders. On top of it all, there seem to be many disincentives to reporting abuse, which leads to under-reporting and higher tolerance of it by workers. Like we learned from the speakers, there are many work-arounds that companies can use even if disbarred, such as using a new name.

2 Gaps and questions

While this outlined some of the data that is available, it could be interesting to go more in depth with the data regarding workers with repeated instances of abuse, per the statistic that experiencing abuse increases the likelihood of later tolerance of abuse, although I am not sure if this data is available or that was a statistic from another data source. It could also be interesting to look at the change over time, as it was mentioned that debarment standards got stricter during one period. With that, if there was information about how many companies then tried to or successfully did change the name of their business to get around the debarment using string matching. I would also want to investigate the data and see how much we can match on for businesses that have violations and see what, besides

possibly the industry, lends a business to being more likely to exploit its workers. Finally, I think there is a lot of interest in the trafficking side and I would be interested to see what we know and what we still need to know related to that.