

A Statement on the recent incident by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the battery manufacturing plant construction site at Ellabell, GA area

First and foremost, the Southeast United States Korean Chamber of Commerce (“SEUSKCC” or the “Chamber”) sends its thoughts and prayers to those detained during the ICE raid that occurred on September 4, 2025, at the Hyundai-LG manufacturing plant construction site, and their family and friends. We urge relevant process enforcement of those detained of Korean nationals and others be treated with respect, and their health and safety prioritized.

In the aftermath of the raid at the site, we remain committed to working to increase workforce and talent development, making efforts to advise and train Korean businesses operating in the U.S. on how to attract such talent and educating of cultural differences between the Korean and Americans in the corporate setting to create a workplace of mutual understanding.

The U.S. faces challenges in meeting workforce demands across industries like manufacturing, semiconductors, and biotechnology, which may stem from shifting interests or limited access to education and training opportunities. The challenges that Korean companies encounter when needing its U.S. workers to cross-train by way of knowledge and skill transfer (i.e., Korean counter-positions meet with U.S. workers and provide hands-on training) has been a long-standing issue that needs to be resolved in a bi-partisan manner. Many times, such cross-training is needed in earlier development stages of the plant and gradually over time local workforce and suppliers would be able to help work on plant maintenance and operations.

We continue to urge U.S. voters, congressional members, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. government to actively engage in discussions and plans for providing companies engaging in foreign direct investment (FDI) with more efficient short-term work authorization options to transfer specialized knowledge and skills to U.S. workers.

Korean companies are working vigorously to help revitalize the U.S. manufacturing industry in various regions of the nation including the State of Georgia. The reality of today’s next generation of manufacturing in the U.S. is that it requires workers from countries such as the ROK to support and train U.S. workers in constructing new state of the art facilities, transfer operational knowledge and specialized skills, and install new machineries and equipment for efficient and effective site set-up. However, in practice, Korean companies remain crippled by lack of U.S. work authorization options for its home country workers to engage in cross-border training and collaboration.

Further, we recommend that Korean companies engaging in FDI (and FDI companies from other nations) prioritize with U.S. legal compliance and open communications to general engagement with the local community where they intend to establish their U.S. ties and resources. With legal compliance, including but not limited to immigration laws and employment laws, as the foundation, becoming familiar with the local or regional workforce and culture is an ongoing crucial part of maintaining respectful and productive relations between the Korean company, its future expatriates and local workforce.

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We continue being committed to supporting the U.S. – ROK friendship and economic relationship, and we urge that those challenges discussed above are prioritized, so that leaders and workers of Korean companies can safely and securely transfer knowledge and specialized skills to U.S. workers who will continue to benefit from Korean companies investing directly into U.S. industries, and particularly in the State of Georgia.

Please reach us with your opinions that matters at Korean.Chamber@seuskcc.org.

If you have a story or want to contribute to the next chapter in our U.S. – Korea’s economic relationship, please consider [joining us](#).