

Islands don't want U.S. immigration laws

by UPI

SAIPAN, Northern Mariana Islands -- A proposal in the U.S. Congress to impose federal immigration laws on the Northern Mariana Islands is worrying officials of the U.S. territory. The government of the Marianas said Congress' plan to slap federal guest-worker rules on the islands would put their fragile economy into a tailspin, The Washington Post reported Monday. About half of the Marianas 60,000 residents are temporary workers who are employed by garment factories dependent on cheap foreign labor. Two bills, one introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and another in the U.S. Senate, are aimed at preventing the Marianas and other U.S. territories from becoming an entry point to reach the United States. The Post said proponents of the legislation consider the Mariana Islands a magnet for human trafficking and a hole in U.S. homeland security. "We think we are much better qualified to administer to our own needs, as opposed to bureaucratic federal offices 9,000 miles away," Richard Pierce, a special assistant to the Marianas governor, told the Post.

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