

Villa MEDICI QUICK MOVE-IN HOMES AVAILABLE!

NEW HOME OPEN HOUSE THIS WEEKEND!

LUXURY TOWNHOMES FROM THE LOW \$200s

SPECTACULAR HEALTHPARK LOCATION | TOP-RATED SCHOOLS | RESORT-STYLE AMENITIES

866-405-7934 VILLAMEDICIFL.COM

15765 PORTOFINO SPRINGS BOULEVARD, 105 • FORT MYERS, FL 33908

SALES CENTER HOURS: MON-SAT 10AM-5:30PM • SUNDAY 12PM-5PM

Lawn Replacement MALONEY'S SOD

"No job too Big or too Small"

Naples & Bonita • 239-775-9339

WWW.maloneysod.com

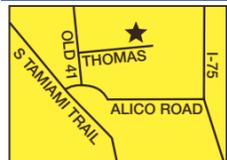
BUY FINE QUALITY FURNITURE AT THE FACTORY!

End of Season Clearance Sale



♦ Limited Quantities ♦ Discontinued Designs ♦ One of a Kind Furniture

♦ Close Outs



SUNCOAST FURNITURE

6291 Thomas Road, Fort Myers, FL 33912

239-267-8300 Ext. 357

www.suncoastfurniture.com

Hours: Mon. thru Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-4, Sun. 11-4

COMMENTARY

It's time to reform the visa program for immigrants, benefit Fla. and US



Roly Marante
GUEST OPINION

Florida is a land of immigrants. Today, nearly 4 million Floridians were born in other countries, representing the fourth-largest immigrant population in the United States. These immigrants have enriched our lives, strengthened our communities and driven growth in our economy. They have helped turn Florida into a vibrant, business-friendly and high-quality-of-life place to live, work, study and raise a family.

Though we have many immigrants in our state, many of our businesses still struggle to access the skilled labor they need to achieve initial or ongoing success, which has a direct impact on our state economy and overall jobs situation. Of course, immigration and border security are on everyone's minds these days. But it is important to realize that we can have an immigration system that keeps us safe, protects American jobs, and still allows American firms to recruit the best and brightest immigrants to come here to work and build businesses.

When highly skilled immigrants come to the United States — especially to places like the Sunshine state — they tend to stay. Many bring or start families, as well as create businesses that drive growth and innovation, increase wages and create jobs in our communities. Instead of making it harder for such immigrants to come to the United States and to Florida, we should be actively recruiting them and — while making sure none are a threat — making it as easy as possible for them to bring their skills to our economy.

This is vital for our future, because there is very serious competition across the globe to find and recruit the most talented people in the world. If the U.S. doesn't act decisively, we will lose this competition — and our economy and native-born workers will lose out as well. There are three primary ways we can better compete in this global race for talent: make Green Cards easier to obtain, create a new category of visas to encourage the best foreign-born entrepreneurs and innovators to start businesses in the U.S., and reform and expand the nation's H-1B visa program, which focuses on high-skilled immigrants.

Foreign-born entrepreneurs are frustrated by the delays inherent to our outdated immigration system — and more recently are turned off by intense anti-immigrant rhetoric and sentiment among some in the U.S. — and are going to places like Canada and



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

Europe, instead. Make no mistake, people want to come to the United States; they know we are a nation of immigrants, one in which their children and grandchildren will be fully accepted as "American." If our immigration system reflected the principles upon which this reality is built, we would win the competition for global talent hands down.

It is up to Congress to fix our immigration system, but thus far, it has been unable to do so. If Congress cannot secure meaningful comprehensive immigration reform, it must take swift action on the many issues surrounding skilled immigrants and the H-1B program. To make the H-1B program work as intended, we must raise the extremely low cap on the number of H-1B visas issued each year. This cap is so low that, when the H-1B "lottery" opens on April 1, available H-1B visas will be snapped up within mere days.

We are leaving a lot of talented entrepreneurs, inventors and businesspeople out in the proverbial cold — here in Florida, we'd like to welcome them to the very real warmth offered by our people and state, and the many opportunities offered by our economy. It's time for Congress to stop stalling and finally reform and expand the H-1B visa program. We can no longer afford to prevent the world's best and brightest from coming to our nation, starting businesses, driving growth, and creating jobs.

Roly Marante serves as chairman of Government Relations for the Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

LARGEST 1-DAY READING FESTIVAL IN FLORIDA **2017 TOP TWENTY EVENTS**

Southwest Florida Reading Festival

THANK YOU!

PRESENTED BY: **Lee County Library System** Since 1964

SPONSORS

				Bank of America
				Friends of the Bonita Springs Public Library
Alliance for the Arts	Friends of the Northwest Regional Library	Midwest Tape		Friends of the Fort Myers Regional Library
Arthrex, Inc.	Friends of the Pine Island Library	OverDrive, Inc.		Florida Gulf Coast University
Atos Origin	Friends of the South County Regional Library	Rasmussen College		
Boost Creative	Girl Scouts of Gulf Coast Florida	Sam's Club/ WalMart		
Edison Ford Winter Estates	Grandezaa	Sonic Recording Studio		
Florida Repertory Theatre	Gulf Coast Symphony	Southwest Florida Romance Writers		
Florida Virtual School	Laura Michele Photos	Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board		
Fort Myers Congregational United Church of Christ	LCEC	Starbuck's		
Friends of the Cape Coral Library	Lee County School District	Tamiami Tale Tellers		
Friends of the North Fort Myers Public Library	Lee Memorial Blood Center	YMCA		
	Literacy Council Gulf Coast			

MEDIA SPONSORS

			
			
Expressions Magazine	Grandeur Magazine	azteca	97.7 Latino
Ft. Myers Magazine	Happenings Magazine & Lee Family News		
		SWFL Parent & Child	

www.ReadFest.org • #SWFLReads

APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS



...AND SPECIAL INSIDER PRIZES!

Log in each week for new sweepstakes to beat the rainy day blues and cure cabin fever.

Enter to win!
News-Press.com/aprilmay

MX5349

THE NEWS-PRESS PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK | **insider**