

Permanent admissions are better for US high-tech workforce than H-1B expansion

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Despite numerous government reports pointing out major flaws and weaknesses of the H-1B visa program, Congress is considering increasing the annual H-1B visa cap by at least 50,000 without strengthening safeguards to protect foreign and domestic technology workers.

The reports reveal "significant weaknesses in the H-1B program that must be corrected to ensure that U.S workers are not adversely affected and H-1B workers are not exploited," IEEE-USA President Ralph W. Wyndrum Jr. said in a 15 March letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee. "As the administration concluded last year, the program has major flaws that leave it vulnerable to fraud and abuse."

Wyndrum also questioned why Congress is considering increasing the H-1B visa cap from 65,000 to 115,000, and including an automatic escalator mechanism for future years, when current legislative provisions would expand permanent admissions of skilled foreign professionals. Among the proposals is a new student visa (F-4) that leads to a green card for foreign nationals pursuing advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics at U.S. colleges. Another proposal would expand employment-based immigrant admissions visas from 140,000 to 290,000; exclude immediate family members from the limit; recapture unused immigrant visas from prior years and exempt advanced-degree professionals from the cap.

IEEE-USA believes the permanent immigration of skilled scientists and

engineers is better for our country's capacity to innovate and meet high-tech workforce demands than another expansion of the badly broken temporary H-1B guest worker program.

"Immigration-based admissions level the playing field for all workers, and ensure that America benefits from recruiting the world's best and brightest as future Americans, rather than training future competitors," Wyndrum said. "We hope Congress will see that permanent immigration is the better solution to strengthening the U.S. high-tech workforce."

IEEE-USA supports the H-1B reform legislation ([www.ieeeusa.org/communications ... es/2005/112105pr.asp](http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications...es/2005/112105pr.asp)) that Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) introduced last November. None of his recommendations for correcting the serious flaws in the H-1B program are included in the latest proposal before Congress.

Source: IEEE-USA

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