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PROGRESSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM



Urgent - SAVE Act Alert!!!



SAVE Act Moving Forward: Urgent Action Needed

(Tuesday, March 11)
Today the House Republican leadership filed a "discharge petition" on the SAVE Act (the Shuler-Tancredo bill) and they are gathering signatures to force the

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Wednesday, April 4, 2007

[More evidence of dysfunctional immigration policy](#)

posted by Duke1676



While most Americans spent this past weekend relaxing and enjoying the first days of spring, in the personnel offices of Microsoft, and Infosys and in countless immigration attorney's offices across the country, the yearly frenzy of the H-1b work-visa filing deadline was fast approaching. Many, like San Francisco attorney Gali Schaham Gordon, spent Saturday putting the final touches on the up to 50 pages of forms sometimes required for each applicant.

By the end of the Monday deadline, representatives of the USCIS said the agency had received a record 150,000 applications for the 65,000 visas available for the 2008 federal fiscal year.

Since the yearly cap was hit in one day, immigration officials announced they would accept all the applications filed Monday and Tuesday and place them in a computer-generated lottery to determine who will receive the visas, which are reserved for architects, engineers, computer programmers and other high - skilled workers.

The visa program, which claims to insure that the "best and brightest" from around the world have an opportunity to work in America and eventually become citizens, was reduced in less than 24 hours to a random lottery.

Herein lies an example of the underlying dysfunctional nature of the current immigration system.

Programs, which at face value look totally rational and in fact beneficial, turn out, due to incompetence, abuse, and a lack of true regulation and oversight, to be ineffectual to the point of being detrimental to both the immigrants and the American people.

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Standing Firm

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The "Jungle" Again

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The shame of

bill to the House floor for a vote.

The bill would :

- Require more than six million employers to verify the work status of more than 130 million workers within four years, regardless of their status, using a federal database already known to have an over 17 million errors

- Make it easier for the government to put religious and humanitarian workers behind bars for so-called "alien smuggling."

- would throw more resources toward ineffective border and interior enforcement rather than offer a comprehensive solution.

Learn More About the SAVE Act [Here](#)

Write Your Representative and tell them not to sign on to support the SAVE Act

We Can Stop the Hate

Code Words of Hate:



Started in 1990, the H1b visa program was supposed to allow those with special skills, higher education, and technical expertise to enter the country legally to work and eventually receive permanent residency and citizenship. It was touted as the best way to assure that a future Einstein would not be turned away at the border. This is particularly true in the case of those foreign students who make up half of the graduates of US universities with degrees in engineering and mathematics.

But what has happened in the years since it's inception has nearly insured that the truly "best and brightest" would in fact be turned away, or at best be placed in an immigration limbo of endless paperwork, long waits and lotteries. Utilizing a first-come first-served system to issue the visas, last years quota ran out in eight weeks... this year...it took less than a day.

In the meantime, an ever increasing number of corporations use the program, and it's lack regulation and oversight, to pad their workforce with temporary workers earning lower wages with little or no legal recourse. Despite claims of portability and competitive wages, many H-1b holders are locked into jobs that pay below market standards with little chance of mobility to find other employment. They are in essence "owed" by those who sponsor them since changing employers forces those trying to get green cards to start the whole process over again with a new sponsor, a process that can take years of paperwork and bureaucratic red tape.

Yet some businesses love the program. Bill Gates regularly makes pilgrimages to Washington to lobby for increased guest-workers for Microsoft even though about one-third of his 46,000 U.S.-based employees have work visas or are former H1b holders who are now legal permanent residents with green cards, according to company spokeswoman Ginny Terzano. Other tech companies are estimated to use guest workers to fill nearly half their employment needs. Since both the H-1b visas, and the employment based green cards that result from them, are limited each year by quotas, the companies that over-utilize them in effect hold a monopoly over the immigration system.

Surely the intent of the program was not to concentrate larger and larger numbers of temporary workers in an ever-decreasing pool of employers. We have no idea yet how many of the 150,000 applications that flooded the USCIS offices on Monday came from Infosys Technologies, Microsoft and Deloitte & Touche, three of the largest users of H-1Bs according to the Department of Labor's office of foreign labor certification, but it's safe to assume they were once again well represented.

Besides the inherent inequity in the program for the immigrants who rely on H-1b visas to live and work in the country, opponents of the program claim that abuses of the system have allowed corporate sponsors to eliminate older, high-paid US workers to be replaced by cheaper foreign labor. Similarly, smaller US companies see the program as not meeting their needs due to its

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ON IMMIGRATION**

Take Action

inefficient implementation.

The current H1-B quota is 65,000, but a series of exemptions make that a soft number. In 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, the U.S. approved 116,927 H1-B visas.

By law, such temporary work permits are normally issued to persons who hold at least a bachelor's degree. Government data show roughly half of people holding H1-Bs meet that minimum. The other half have master's degrees or better, although high school dropouts with vital experience can qualify -- which happened in 2003 when 117 fashion models won H1-B visas.

H1-B work permits run on a fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. Immigration officials say Monday is the soonest they'll accept applications, and employers fear that if they don't file their applications as soon as possible, this first-come, first-served system will exhaust its quota quickly.

...snip...

A similar rush last year forced Seth Sternberg, chief executive of Meebo, to delay some hiring plans. Meebo, a Mountain View developer of a Web site for instant messaging from anywhere, had hoped to add two foreign programmers to its 15-person staff last year. On May 27, the startup filed the paperwork to hire the two people, one from the United Kingdom and the other from Italy. But it turned out that last year's quota had been exhausted the day before Meebo's requests arrived.

"We'll have those applications ready to go day one," Sternberg said last week. He plans to resubmit the visa requests to hire those two same code warriors starting this October

Such frustrations have made an overhaul of the H1-B system a top priority of high-tech leaders.

...snip...

But H1-B critics -- led by older American-born programmers and their academic allies -- say even if U.S. high-tech firms need employees from overseas to stay competitive, the program is flawed in a way that leads to the loss of jobs through outsourcing.

...snip...

... those opposed to lifting the H1-B cap say the present program gives employers all the tools they need to absorb the highly skilled foreign graduates that tech officials talk about, and complain -- with justification --

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