



January 29, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders Reid and McConnell,

We write to urge your colleagues to support the Immigration Innovation Act of 2013. America's immigration system is in need of reform, especially with respect to highly-skilled foreign workers. The Immigration Innovation Act will keep American businesses competitive by giving them access to high-skilled labor for jobs they are unable to fill with native-born workers. And it will jumpstart the domestic high-skilled labor supply by investing in American science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education.

This bill would increase the cap on H-1B visas for highly-skilled workers from 65,000 to 115,000, and allow that cap to adjust up or down based on the labor demands of the economy. It would also uncap the H-1B exemption for those with advanced U.S. degrees. And it would expand access to green cards for people with advanced STEM degrees, dependents of those with employment based visas, and outstanding professors and researchers.

Allowing more high-skilled immigration is one of the most important steps we can take to improve America's economy and maintain its global competitiveness. As nations like China and India are growing at breakneck speed, it is imperative that the American economy be allowed to innovate and grow. High-skilled immigrants play an integral role in that growth; Immigrants are 30 percent more likely to start a new business than native-born Americans, and newly formed businesses are responsible for the vast majority of new jobs created. When America turns away a potential investor, entrepreneur, or job creator, that person does not simply cease to exist. She returns to her own country and starts a business that competes directly with American companies. And she hires citizens of her own country instead of Americans.

There are currently over 80,000 technology jobs in the U.S. that are available to Americans but remain unfilled. In the long run, it is important to emphasize domestic STEM education to better prepare Americans for the jobs of the future. But in the meantime, welcoming more highly-skilled workers to our shores makes perfect sense. We urge your support of the Immigration Innovation Act of 2013.

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist, President, Americans for Tax Reform

Al Cardenas, Chairman, American Conservative Union

R. Bruce Josten, Executive Vice President of Government Affairs, US Chamber of Commerce

David Bier, Immigration Policy Analyst, Competitive Enterprise Institute

Brian Burch, President, Catholic Vote

Chuck Muth, President, Citizen Outreach

Mario H. Lopez, President, Hispanic Leadership Fund

Alfonso Aguilar, Executive Director, Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles

Rick Watson, Chairman, Florida Center-Right Coalition

Andrew Moylan, Senior Fellow, R Street Institute