

## AMERICA NEEDS THE WORLD'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST INNOVATORS

### A highly educated workforce is America's competitive advantage

We have long been a magnet for the best and brightest innovators from around the world. Brilliant researchers, scientists and engineers flock to our world-class universities, but once they have their diplomas U.S. immigration policy makes it almost impossible for these U.S. educated professionals to work, live and become productive citizens in America.

In a world where talent and capital are available globally, this is a significant problem for U.S. high-tech businesses. Foreign nationals represent a large percentage of the science and engineering graduates that will be key in solving national challenges such as energy, health care, and national security. **It is imperative to our nation's economic future that we not allow these talented individuals to get lost in our broken immigration system.**

Despite the industry's best efforts to encourage Americans to pursue careers in STEM fields, presently foreign nationals represent half of the masters' degrees and over 2/3 of the PhD's granted from U.S. universities in electrical engineering, the lifeblood of the semiconductor industry.

### America's Immigration System: A Competitive Disadvantage

Congress has failed to reform the employment-based (EB) green card and H-1B visa systems that U.S. employers use to recruit and retain top worldwide talent.

- The broken green card system causes employees to spend years in limbo, unable to be promoted or relocated without restarting the process.
- Over 3,700 H-1Bs in the semiconductor industry seek permanent resident status.
- Over 500 applicants have been waiting for 4 years or more.
- The result is that America is less welcoming to the world's best and brightest at a time when other countries are increasing their efforts to attract these individuals.

To move forward we believe it is important for parties with different viewpoints to come together and seek common understanding, which is why the SIA has reached agreement with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers -U.S.A. (IEEE-USA) on permanent, employment-based immigration reform, and we urge Congress to do the same.

### SIA Calls On Congress To Support U.S. Innovation Through High-Skilled Immigration Reform

- Exempt graduates with advanced STEM degrees from U.S. universities from the EB green card cap to allow U.S. employers to retain foreign-born employees already working in America; and
- Streamline the path from student to permanent resident to allow U.S. companies to access key talent, particularly individuals educated at U.S. universities.

### KEY FACTS

- Foreign nationals represent half of the masters' degrees and over 2/3 of the PhDs in electrical engineering granted from U.S. universities.
- Massive backlogs in the permanent resident, EB green card system leave some professionals waiting six to 10 years.
- The Kauffman Foundation estimated that over a million highly educated people are waiting for green cards, yet only 120,000 are available annually.

*The new Congress has a chance to help the U.S. economy by working with the White House to make it easier for the world's young and talented to stay in America after they've earned their Ph.Ds.*

Wall Street Journal  
Feb. 1, 2011  
"It Makes No Sense"