



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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Dear Senator,

As President of the International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE), AFL-CIO, I am writing regarding your consideration of S. 1348, the comprehensive immigration reform bill. In particular, IFPTE would like to express our strong opposition to the legislation's call for an increase in H-1B Visas from its current annual allotment of 65,000 to 115,000.

While IFPTE remains opposed to any increase in the H-1B Visa numbers, the union is supportive of an amendment to be offered by Senator Bernard Sanders (I, VT). The Sanders amendment will significantly increase employer fees on H-1B Visas and use the resulting resources for scholarships in math, science, engineering and nursing education. As a union representing tens of thousands of workers in these very fields, IFPTE applauds Sen. Sanders for bringing this legislation before the full Senate and urges you to support its passage.

As IFPTE has argued for years, there is little evidence to support the claim that the H-1B program is the answer to a perceived lack of American workers in the fields of engineering and science. In reality the H-1B program provides employers with a yearly pool of workers from abroad who are willing to work here in the United States for significantly lower wages than that of their American counterparts. They receive fewer if any benefits and, for the most part, are not subject to most U.S. labor laws. In essence, the government sanctioned H-1B program is a globalization-in-reverse policy.

To his credit, Sen. Sanders recognizes the falsehood that there are not enough highly technical U.S. workers to fill the needs of employers. His amendment also recognizes that the H-1B program itself is the real danger to American workers seeking jobs in engineering and science. If students see that H-1B workers are being brought in to fill highly skilled jobs here in the U.S., they are likely to forgo pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in these fields.

Sen. Sanders' legislation creates a new National Science Foundation scholarship program to award merit-based scholarships of up to \$15,000 per year for students to pursue associate, undergraduate or graduate level degrees in mathematics, engineering, nursing, medicine, or computer science. The scholarships would be awarded to over 65,000 American students each year and would be funded by increasing the current \$1,500 employer fee per H-1B worker to \$8,500 per worker. This legislation essentially calls on the very employers who claim there are not enough American workers to fill these jobs to put their money where their mouth is.

I ask that you support the Sanders H-1B Visas amendment.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Junemann,
President

