



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

8630 Fenton Street, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-565-9016 • FAX 301-565-0018 • www.ifpte.org

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June 22, 2007

Dear Senator,

As President of the International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE), AFL-CIO, I am writing regarding the Senate's expected re-consideration of S. 1348, the comprehensive immigration reform bill. Given the many shortcomings of S. 1348, IFPTE is disappointed to learn that the Senate leadership has apparently reached a deal with the White House that has cleared the path for its potential reconsideration. While the legislation is a blessing for the corporate community, it is clear that from the perspective of American workers this bill includes a laundry list of shortcomings.

IFPTE is particularly dubious of the bill's massive liberalization of guest-worker programs such as H-1B. Among the many options I have heard with respect to this expansion is the complete removal of the cap on annual H-1B visa allotments. To add insult to injury, this evisceration of the cap could come absent a single reform of the program. This would not only be devastating to current U.S. workers in high-tech fields, but such a policy would also serve notice to American students exploring careers in engineering, science and other technical fields that U.S. employers are no longer in need of their services.

Given the fine work of Senators Durbin (D, IL) and Grassley (R, IA) by introducing legislation aimed at overhauling the H-1B and L-1 visa programs, it is inexplicable to learn that there is little to no consideration being given to including many of the fine reforms called for by the Durbin/Grassley bill. Among the many changes called for in the *H-1B and L-1 Visa Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act of 2007*, (S. 1035) are, (1) require ALL employers seeking to hire an H-1B visa holder to assert that they have made a good-faith effort to hire American workers first and that the H-1B visa holder will not displace an American worker; (2) require that before an employer may submit an H-1B application, the company must first advertise the job opening for 30 days on a DOL website (DOL would also be required to post summaries of all H-1B applications on its website); (3) require that H-1B employers may not advertise a job as available only for H-1B visa holders or recruit only H-1B visa holders for a job; and, (4) prohibit employers from hiring H-1B employees who are then outsourced to other companies (a tactic typically used by employers in order to evade restrictions on hiring H-1Bs).

IFPTE remains opposed to any increase in H-1B visas and asks that the Senate instead move to adopt the language included in the Durbin/Grassley reform bill. All of the recommendations included in S. 1035 are sound ones and should be the only priority when it comes to H-1B reform. Any increase, particularly a complete lifting of the cap, would be devastating to U.S. high-tech workers.

IFPTE believes that the countless shortcomings included in S. 1348 render it damaged beyond repair and requests that you oppose both cloture and the bill itself. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or IFPTE Legislative Director Matt Biggs, at (301) 565-9016.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Junemann,
President