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## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0304

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## Keep America's Workforce Competitive

### *Cosponsor the SKIL Bill to Retain Highly Educated Workers*

Dear Colleague:

Maintaining America's competitive edge is vital to our economic and national security. Competitiveness, however, is not just about technology and regulations. Our workforce must also remain competitive, and we must retain highly skilled and highly educated individuals for America to continue to prosper. To that end, I invite you to join me in sponsoring the Securing Knowledge, Innovation, and Leadership (SKIL) Act.

The "SKIL Bill" recognizes that the United States benefits when highly educated foreign nationals live and work in this country. Foreign-born scientists, health care professionals, teachers, engineers, and entrepreneurs help drive innovation and job creation here at home.

Imagine if cutting edge American companies such as eBay, Intel, Google, Sun Microsystems, and Yahoo! were founded in Europe or Asia. All of these companies, and many, many others were created – all or in part – by foreign-born entrepreneurs, many of whom graduated from U.S. universities.

In 2005, foreign nationals earned more than 40 percent of the master's degrees and 60 percent of the doctorate degrees in engineering awarded by U.S. universities. In my home state of Arizona, 63 percent of all engineering master's degrees and 65 percent of engineering PhDs from the University of Arizona and Arizona State University were awarded to foreign students. It makes absolutely no sense to educate and train these talented individuals and then refuse to allow them to stay in the United States.

Current policy, in effect, mandates that we send these innovative minds home, or to other countries which welcome their skills, to compete against us. The FY2007 allotment of H-1B visas was exhausted last month – *five months before the start of the fiscal year* – and three months earlier than the FY2006 cap was reached last year. That means no new highly skilled workers can be brought into the United States under the program, or allowed to stay, until October 2007. Employers cannot even apply for new visas until next April.

The SKIL Bill would address this growing problem by increasing the allotment of visas to its previous, higher level. The bill would also allow graduates of U.S. universities the chance to stay in America and contribute to our economy.

We must do more to educate Americans in math, science and engineering and ensure that more Americans are studying these disciplines at higher levels. However, we cannot ignore the requirements of the global economy and allow ourselves to lose the brains behind the next eBay or Google because of broken immigration policies.

I hope you will join me in sponsoring this vital legislation. Please contact Chris Hutchison in my office at x5-3361 for more information or to sign on to the bill.

Sincerely,

John Shadegg  
Member of Congress