



May 16, 2008

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security  
and International Law  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
517 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Employment-Based Immigration Reform Bills

Dear Chairman Lofgren:

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers – United States of America (IEEE-USA) and the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) strongly support and urge prompt enactment of your permanent, employment-based immigration reform bills (H.R. 5882 with Rep. Sensenbrenner, H.R. 5921 with Rep. Goodlatte, and H.R. 6039 with Rep. Cannon).

As you know, last fall the SIA and IEEE-USA identified our shared support for reform of the nation's permanent (immigrant) admissions system. Media stories often highlight our organizations' different positions on temporary visa programs, but to move forward we believed it was important for parties with different viewpoints to come together and seek common understanding.

The IEEE-USA and SIA continue to support the fundamental employment-based reforms that we outlined last fall, but recognize that the modest proposals that you have put forward are a realistic starting point. Specifically, your bills focus on three areas where the need for reform is compelling and deserves bipartisan support:

- Foreign nationals comprise half of the masters and 70 percent of the PhDs in electrical engineering from U.S. universities. These graduates and others earning advanced degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields at U.S. schools often have to wait six or more years for employment based permanent resident status. By exempting these graduates from the current employment-based admissions quotas H.R. 6039, will ensure that this talent is retained to benefit the United States for the long term.
- Due to limits under current law, applicants for employment-based immigrant admissions from high demand countries, such as India and China, often have to wait seven to ten years or more for their immigrant visa petitions to be adjudicated. H.R. 5921 will put an end to such interminable delays for skilled foreign professionals, including engineers and scientists, by eliminating unduly restrictive per country limits on employment-based immigration.

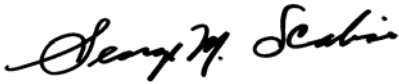
- H.R. 5882 will help to reduce visa backlogs and processing delays in immigrant admissions by “recapturing” unused employment-based visas from prior years and making them available for immediate use by petitioners who meet all statutory requirements for admission as legal permanent residents.

If enacted, these three simple changes will enhance U.S. technological competitiveness and enable highly educated immigrants to contribute to job creation in the U.S. The IEEE-USA and SIA stand ready to assist your efforts to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Russell J. Lefevre  
President, IEEE-USA



George Scalise  
President, Semiconductor Industry Association