The Honorable Raul Labrador  
1523 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  

July 6, 2011  

Dear Congressman Labrador:  

On behalf of the 531 members of the Boise Section of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), I would like to express my support for high-skill immigration reform. As the technology professionals who drive innovation in Idaho’s increasingly high-tech economy, we believe that making it easier for skilled professionals to become American citizens would be good for our companies, our city, Idaho, and the entire American economy.

Specifically, we would like you to make it easier for international students who earn masters or Ph.Ds. from American universities in STEM (science, technology, engineering or math) fields to become U.S. citizens. This can most easily be done by granting them an exemption from the EB (employment-based) visa cap so that they can earn a green card within a year of graduating.

International graduate students are among the most innovative and entrepreneurial people in our country. They are more likely to start their own businesses, create new intellectual property and stimulate job growth than other Americans – but only after they receive a green card. We would like as many of them working and starting new companies here, in Idaho, as possible, especially since the alternative is frequently them working for our competitors overseas.

EB visa reform is the key to unlocking the entrepreneurial energies of America’s international STEM students. And it is entrepreneurial energy, from long-time Americans and new Americans, that will drive economic growth in Idaho and America.

As a former immigration attorney, you are uniquely placed to play a leading role in promoting high-skill immigration reform this year. On behalf of Boise’s technology engineers, I urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Chris Gunning  
Chair, IEEE Boise Section