

AGENDA ITEM 7

Status of Pending Federal Legislation Engineering Careers & Workforce Policy Issues

**109th Congress
2005 - 2006**

Health Care	Association Health Plans Health Savings Accounts Retiree Health Benefits
Retirement	Cash Balance Plans DC/DB Plan Reform, Including Pension Under-funding Phased Retirement Retirement Savings Incentives Social Security Reform
Education	Federal Agency Scholarship Programs K-12 Math & Science Partnerships Higher Education (NDE) Act Reauthorization IT Training Tax Credits Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization
Immigration	Border Security Expedited Visa Processing Permanent Immigration Reform Proposals Temporary (Non-Immigrant) Visa Reforms
Offshoring	Data Needs Displaced Worker Assistance Programs Government Procurement Tax and Trade Policy Technological Competitiveness & Innovation
Other Workforce	Aerospace and defense Industry Workforce

Health

Association Health Plans

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HR 525/S 406

Small Business Health Fairness Act
Rep Sam Johnson (R-TX-03) and 97 Cosponsors)
Sens Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Jim Talent (R-MO)

Amends ERISA to improve access to and choice of health benefits for employees of small businesses.

Introduced in the House on Feb 2; in the Senate on Feb 17

Health

Health Savings Accounts

HR 2596

Health Savings and Affordability Act
Rep Bill Thomas (R-CA-33)

Enacted as part of the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement Act in Dec 2003 (Public Law 108-173), health savings accounts are designed to help individuals save for qualified medical and retiree health expenses on a tax-free basis.

Retirement

Pension Reform

S 219

National Savings & Trust Guaranty Act
Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA)

Revises ERISA requirements with respect to plan funding and interest rates; portability and distributions; spousal protections; employer stock and investment diversification issues

Introduced in the Senate on Jan 31, 2005

Retirement

Pension Under-funding/PBGC Solvency Problems

Admin Proposal

To strengthen funding requirements for single-employer defined benefit pension plans

Provides for replacement of the 30 year Treasury interest rate with a blended corporate bond rate; improved disclosures for workers, investors and regulators; PBGC premium adjustments to better reflect plan risk and funding status.

Retirement

Social Security Reform – Private Account Proposals

HR 440

Bipartisan Retirement Security Act
Rep Jim Kolbe (R-AZ—08)

To amend the Social Security Act to create individual security accounts funded by employer and employee payroll deductions and allow individuals to direct 2 to 3 percent of wages subject to tax into personal accounts.

Introduced on Feb 01, 2005

HR 530

Individual Social Security Investment Plan Act
Rep Sam Johnson (R-TX-03) and 10 cosponsors

To amend the Social Security Act and the Internal Revenue Code to allow individuals to direct up to 100% of their Social Security payroll tax deduction (6.2% of wages up to \$90,000) into a personal retirement account with several investment options.

Introduced on Feb 02, 2005

HR 750

Social Security Guarantee Plus Act
Rep E. Clay Shaw (R-FL-22) and 2 cosponsors

To amend the Social Security Act and the Internal Revenue Code to allow workers to contribute an extra 1.6% of wages subject to the Social Security tax to an “additional” private account.

Introduced on Feb 01, 2005

Education

Federal Agency Scholarship Programs

HR 421

GI Advanced Education in Science & Technology Act
Rep John Sweeney (R-NY-20)

To amend title 38 of the US Code to provide for the payment of stipends to veterans pursuing doctoral degrees in science, math, engineering or other technology disciplines.

Introduced on Jan 26, 2005

Education**K-12 Math & Science Education Partnerships****Page 4**

FY 06 Budget

Department of Education – Increases funding for DoED administered MSP program from \$179 M to \$269 M (a 51% increase), but earmarks \$120 M for a new competitive Secondary Education Mathematics Initiative grants program.

FY 06 Budget

National Science Foundation – Calls for

Education**Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization**

HR 27

Job Training Improvement Act
Rep Howard (Buck) McKeon (R-CA-25)

To amend the Workforce Investment Act to reauthorize appropriations for WIA programs including: job training and employment assistance; adult education and vocational rehabilitation services. Includes individual training account and dislocated worker training provisions.

Introduced on Jan 04, 2005; Reported by the House Education and Workforce Committee on Feb 25.

Immigration**Border Security**

HR 418

REAL ID Act of 2005
Rep James Sensenbrenner (R-WI-05)

To improve border security by establishing federal standards for state driver's licenses; making it more difficult to gain asylum in the United States; making it easier to remove suspected terrorists; and completing the security barrier between the US and Mexico.

Introduced on Jan 26, 2005; Passed by the House (261-161) on Feb 10, 2005

Johnson Amdt

To prevent unintended US job losses
Rep Nancy Johnson (R-CT-05)

To ensure that the H-1B and L temporary visa programs are utilized for the purposes for which they were intended and not to displace U.S. workers with lower cost foreign workers by closing

loopholes, strengthening program enforcement and increasing penalties for violations.

Offered on Feb 08, 2005 – Not accepted

Immigration

Permanent Immigration Reform Proposals

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HR 139

Health Improvement and Professionals Act
Rep Tom Lantos (D-CA-12)

To reduce the current 3 year backlog of applications for legal permanent resident status under the employment-based admissions program by providing for the “recapture” in FY 2005 of 130,000 EB-3 visas that were unused in FY 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004

Introduced on Jan 04, 2005

Immigration

Temporary Immigration Reform Proposals

Admin Proposal

Fair and Secure Immigration Reform

Calls for a new temporary worker program to match willing foreign workers (including undocumented aliens) with US employers with jobs when no Americans can be found to fill the jobs. Temporary resident status would be good for 3 years, be renewable and include incentives to return home when it ends.

Originally proposed on Jan 07, 2004; restated in the President’s State of the Union message on Feb 02,2005

Immigration

Expedited Visa Processing

State Dept Notice

Visa Mantis Clearance Requirements for SET Personnel
US Department of State

Departmental extension of Visa Mantis clearance requirements for F (student), H (temporary worker), J (exchange visitor), L (intra-company transfer) and B (tourist and business).

Announced on Feb 11, 2005

Offshoring

Data Needs

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FY05 CJS Approps Offshore Outsourcing Study Requirements
Rep Frank Wolf (R-VA-10)

FY 2005 Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations earmarks \$2 million for a study to assess the impact of offshore outsourcing on the economy and employment in the United States.

Enacted (Public Law 108-199) in December 2004

Offshoring

Government Procurement

State Contracts See State by State Summary of State legislative Efforts to Curb Offshore Outsourcing and Visa Abuse at <http://www.washtech.org>

Offshoring

Tax and Trade Policy

Jobs Creation Jumpstart Our Business Strength (JOBS) Act
Sen Charles Grassley (R-IA)/ Rep Bill Thomas (R-CA-33)

Includes provisions establishing new tax incentives and foreign income repatriation rules to encourage businesses to establish manufacturing facilities and create jobs in the United States
Enacted (Public Law 108-357) on Oct 22, 2004

Offshoring

Technological Competitiveness & Innovation

HR 250 Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act
Rep Vernon Ehlers (R-MI-03)

To establish an interagency committee to coordinate Federal manufacturing research and development efforts and promote innovation in manufacturing and manufacturing education.

Introduced on Jan 06, 2005

HR 758

To establish an interagency aerospace industry revitalization task force to develop a national strategy to improve aerospace workforce recruitment, training and utilization.

Rep Vernon Ehlers (R-MI-03)

Introduced on Feb 10, 2005

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