

VON Government Relations Report - April 09 -17, 2009

Marshall Plan Briefing - Attended a briefing on a proposed framework for comprehensive employment-based immigration reform developed for consideration by AFL-CIO and Change To Win union affiliates by a task force chaired by former Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall and including representatives from the Washington –based Economic Policy Institute.

The so-called Marshall Plan calls for five essential and interrelated reforms: 1) creation of an independent Foreign Worker Adjustment Commission to periodically measure labor shortages and recommend the numbers and characteristics of temporary and permanent immigrants who should be admitted in response to these shortages; 2) effective border controls and internal tracking systems; 3) a fair and efficient employment authorization system complemented by more effective labor law enforcement; 4) a fair and humane system for legalizing unauthorized immigrants; and 5) reform (but not expansion) of temporary (non-immigrant) employment-based admissions programs.

Agreement on the proposed statement of principles by representatives of the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win Federation was announced at a press conference in Washington on April 14th.

Morrison Public Affairs Group – Met (with Russ Harrison) with Bruce Morrison and Paul Donnelly of Morrison Public Affairs Group to begin planning strategy for re-engaging with Congress and other stakeholders – including business, educational, immigrant, labor and other professional organizations – in a concerted effort to promote introduction of “Green Cards, Not Guest-workers” immigration reform legislation in the 111th Congress. Essential components of such legislation should include: 1) an expanded and improved legal permanent admissions (EB Visa) program for STEM professionals; 2) expedited adjustment of foreign professionals with advanced degrees in STEM fields from US schools from temporary student to legal permanent resident status; 3) reform of badly broken temporary (non-immigrant) admissions programs including the H-1B specialty occupation and L-1 intra-company transfer work visa programs; and 4) expedited entry authorizations for short-term visitors coming temporarily to study, conduct research or attend conferences in the United States.

Energy Workforce Development Collaborative - Assisted (Bill Williams) and a joint IEEE-USA/IEEE Power Engineering Society Task Force to assemble proposed energy workforce development recommendations in response to a request for input from the Office of Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). Senator Bingaman chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The recently enacted Economic Stimulus Bill – the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Public Law 111-5) authorizes the expenditure of \$100 million dollars on energy workforce development programs, primarily by the Department of Energy, over the next two years.

Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology – Met with Lisa Frehill, the Executive Director of the Washington-based Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology (CPST) to learn more about a proposed Department of Energy contract with CPST and Summit Consulting LLC to identify and

assess official sources of energy workforce statistics and evaluate current DoE energy workforce development programs.

CPST specializes in the collection, analysis and publication of reliable information about human resources in the fields of science, engineering and technology in the United States. CPST does for scientific disciplines what the Engineering Workforce Commission does for engineering fields.

Meeting with Edward E. Gordon – Met (with Russ Harrison) with Edward Gordon, a consulting human resources development professional based in Palm Desert CA and Chicago IL to discuss his books and proposed plans to organize a briefing and/or a Congressional hearing on what needs to be done to strengthen education, training and lifelong learning opportunities in the United States if America is to maintain its economic and technological leadership in an increasingly competitive, technology-driven global economy.

Gordon's books - *The 2010 Meltdown: Solving the Impending Jobs Crisis* (Praeger, 2005) and *Winning the Global Talent Showdown: How Business and Communities Can Partner to Rebuild the Jobs Pipeline* (Berrett-Koehler, 2009) - document the demographic, technological and cultural challenges that confront public education from grade school to graduate school and beyond in the United States and elsewhere in the world and identify innovative public-private partnerships that are working to improve teaching and learning in classrooms, at worksites and on-line at the local, state and national levels.

House Science and Technology Committee Staff – Met with key staffers on the House Science and Technology Committee's Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee to explore their interest in a possible Congressional hearing that would feature Ed Gordon and other educational experts as well as representatives from stakeholder organizations including university and community colleges; training and development organizations; employer associations, labor unions and professional societies and local public/private partnerships that are working together to effect substantive changes in urban, suburban and rural communities across the United States.

A follow-up meeting to introduce Dr. Gordon to HS&T staff will be held on April 20th.

House Education & Labor Committee Staff – Met with key staff on the Democratic side of the House Education and Labor Committee, including education, health care, labor, retirement security and lifelong learning policy advisors, to discuss the current outlook for health care and retirement security reform proposals as well as to explore the possibility of a hearing on education, training and lifelong learning imperatives featuring Ed Gordon.

Follow-up conversations with education and life-long learning policy advisors will be scheduled shortly.

Bipartisan Temporary Visa Reform Legislation – Met (with Russ Harrison) jointly with legislative staff from the offices of Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) to discuss the imminent re-introduction of legislation to reform the badly-broken H-1B (Specialty Occupation) and L-1 (Intra-

company Transfer) temporary work visa programs. Current plans call for the introduction of a proposed bill, with expanded safeguards for US and foreign workers, during the week of April 20-24th.

The Senate staffers will welcome a strong IEEE-USA statement of support for the bill in an official letter to members of the Senate; in a press release to mainstream and industry publications; and in grass-roots communications from IEEE-USA members when the bill is officially introduced.

IEEE's 125th Anniversary Resolution – Worked (with IEEE-USA Communications and Public Relations Director Chris McManes) and staff in the Office of Representative Bart Gordon (D-TN-06), the Chair of the House Science and Technology Committee to draft appropriate text for a Congressional Resolution recognizing the IEEE upon the occasion of its 125th Anniversary on May 6, 2009. The proposed resolution will be co-sponsored by Representative Cliff Stearns (R-FL-06), the only Electrical Engineer in Congress.

IEEE and IEEE-USA Efforts to recruit additional co-sponsors for the resolution will begin in earnest as soon as it is introduced.

VON Gov Rels Report (April 09-17)