

March 12, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Majority Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA), I write to urge the Congress to make long overdue reforms to the U.S. high skilled immigration system. Access to the best-and-brightest scientists and engineers, regardless of where they are born, is critical to ensuring semiconductors remain a top U.S. export and our industry continues to be a key driver of a strong and innovative American economy.

The best-and-brightest students from around the world are attracted to our world-class universities, and today, more than two-thirds of current graduate students in electrical engineering and computer science at U.S. universities are foreign nationals. Once they have their diplomas, current U.S. immigration policy makes it almost impossible for these educated professionals to work, live, and contribute to the American economy.

America's innovation edge and the success of the \$200 billion U.S. semiconductor industry rests on the efforts of scientists and engineers to develop innovative products that are better than the competition both here and abroad. Our companies are actively engaged in workforce and skills development efforts throughout the country, but a comprehensive workforce strategy must include high skilled immigration reforms. Urgent action is needed to maintain our technological edge.

The Congress should act swiftly to address the following key issues:

Alleviate the existing green card backlog, by ending discriminatory per country limits and exempting STEM advanced degree graduates of U.S. institutions of higher education from green card caps. Currently, many individuals, including exemplary scientists and engineers trained at U.S. universities, may wait over a decade to receive permanent status simply because of where they were born.

Make necessary reforms to the H-1B system to ensure access for legitimate uses and prevent abuse. The insufficient, decades-old cap on H-1B visas means that many highly skilled individuals recruited by U.S. companies for their unique expertise and experience face no better odds than the flip of a coin when they seek authorization to work in the U.S. The cap on H-1B visas and required wages for entry-level foreign professionals should be determined by market demands, and reforms should protect legitimate users while preventing abuse and the displacement of American workers.

Ensure fees collected in the high skilled immigration system are directed to effective U.S. STEM workforce training. Through new technologies and business insights, the highly talented foreign professionals we recruit create new opportunities and new American jobs. Fees collected through our high skilled immigration system should be directed to programs that ensure more Americans are prepared to tackle tomorrow's high-tech challenges, keeping the U.S. at the forefront of innovation.

We strongly urge you to take prompt action on these critical high skilled immigration reforms to ensure we welcome the best and brightest with open arms, not long lines and uncertain futures.

Sincerely,



John Neuffer

cc: The Honorable Orrin Hatch
The Honorable Mike Lee
The Honorable Kevin Yoder