



**Statement for the Record on the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing:
Immigration Reforms Needed to Protect Skilled American Workers**

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(The Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers – United States of America)

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Chairman Grassley and Ranking Minority Leader Leahy,

On behalf of the more than 200,000 electrical and electronics engineers who make up the IEEE-USA, the largest organization of high tech workers in America, I want to thank the Senate Judiciary Committee for this important hearing.

The IEEE was founded by Alexander Graham Bell, who was an immigrant, and Thomas Edison, who was not. So from the very beginning we have represented the balance of America's national interest in leading the world not just in technology, but also in the development of a skilled American workforce and the economic progress that technology drives.

We know that America needs to attract and retain the world's best technology talent. That's how Alexander Graham Bell came to America, where he founded us.

But there's a right way and a wrong way to attract talent. America welcomed Bell as a new American. If America had required Dr. Bell to be an indentured servant for a decade, he might well have gone to Canada – or back to Scotland – to invent the telephone.

I know the Committee has heard a lot about how necessary the H-1B program is to enable American employers to recruit the world's best talent. I assure you, it isn't.

This is the true face of the H-1B program: 500 Americans fired from their jobs at Southern California Edison after being required to train their replacements. You will hear that H-1Bs are needed because they fill jobs Americans are not qualified to do. Yet Americans in California were doing these jobs – the H-1Bs employed by the contractor who replaced them did not know how. Southern California Edison has been candid about their motive for hiring a contractor who uses H-1B workers: they're cheaper. It's not about skills.

We've seen this in Minnesota – Cargill and Best Buy. We've seen it in New England – Pfizer and Northeast Utilities. We've seen it in Florida – Disney and Nielsen. And these are just the companies we know of.

But that's not the worst of it.

As we saw with Nielsen in Tampa, the H-1B is a job-exporting machine. The employer won incentives from the community on the promise to create well-paying American jobs. They hired Americans at good wages. Then they fired those Americans, replacing them with a lower-priced contractor. But that's not an example of a free market, because the workers were recruited outside the United States and brought here to undercut US wages: the American government is supplying temporary foreign workers to replace Americans. Those workers were trained by the Americans they replaced.

And when they had been trained, the jobs themselves were offshored for even lower wages and worse working conditions.

More than half of H-1B visas go to outsourcing companies. All of the top users of the H-1B program are outsourcers. This is what the H-1B visa is used for.

So how can companies hire the world's most talented workers? The answer is green cards, not guest worker visas.

The IEEE-USA represents the people who actually invented the Internet, who run the electrical grid and write the standards for cell phones and WiFi. We don't take a back seat to anybody in wanting the best talent to be educated in American STEM programs, to stay here and to become Americans - creating and keeping good jobs in America. We strongly supported S. 744's provisions to provide unlimited green cards to foreign advanced STEM degree graduates of American schools, provided as soon as they are hired. We also supported S. 744's restrictions on H-1B outsourcing.

Why would Senators retreat from those bipartisan provisions, which passed the Senate?

The answer to America's high needs isn't more outsourcing and indenturement. It's new Americans.

It's green cards, not guest worker visas.