

News Release

H-1B Bill Takes Steps in the Right Direction – But Doesn't Go Far Enough

WASHINGTON (15 November 2017) – The House Judiciary Committee is set to vote on an amended version of HR 170 today, the “Protect and Grow American Jobs Act” introduced by Representative Darrell Issa. The bill contains positive changes to the H-1B system, but doesn't go far enough to protect American and non-American workers.

IEEE-USA recognizes that HR 170 would improve the H-1B program by cracking down on pure outsourcing companies. That is, companies whose only business is hiring H-1B workers to rent to other companies. These companies would face new constraints on their businesses and have to pay their workers higher wages.

However, HR 170 doesn't prohibit all companies from using the H-1B visa to replace American workers with non-American workers who will never be allowed to become Americans, and therefore will permit outsourcing to continue.

IEEE-USA has long supported the policy of “*Green Cards, Not Guest Workers*” or expanding the employment-based green card program to allow skilled immigrants to fully participate in the U.S. economy and quickly become American citizens. If companies really need to hire non-American employees inside the United States, they should be allowed to do so, *but those hires should be prospective American citizens*, not temporary guest workers.

Unfortunately, HR 170 perpetuates the outsourcing loophole built into the H-1B program in 1998. By choosing not to remove this special outsourcing authorization, Congress is choosing to allow some companies to replace their American workers with lower cost non-Americans.

“IEEE-USA appreciates Congress' efforts to restrict outsourcing, and we recognize that HR 170 is a step in the right direction” said IEEE-USA President Karen Pedersen, “however, in its current form, this legislation misses an opportunity to guarantee that American workers are never again replaced by an H-1B worker. And that is disappointing.”

Congress clearly recognizes that the H-1B visa program is a threat to American jobs and American competitiveness. But ending this threat will require an unambiguous statement in law that companies cannot use the visa to replace Americans... ever. H.R. 170 does not do this.

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