



February 5, 2009

Dear Senator,

The large Economic Stimulus Bill being debated in the Senate is now being threatened by an immigration amendment that will hurt immigrant workers, the businesses they work for, and the economy. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Immigration Lawyers Association urge you to oppose counterproductive amendments.

Specifically, we urge your opposition to Senator Sanders' H-1b amendment, number 306, which would prevent U.S. employers who are using TARP funds from accessing highly skilled, professional foreign talent that would allow them to stay competitive in the global marketplace. U.S. businesses who are trying desperately to recover financially **MUST** have access to specialty skills inside our country, so they can keep their businesses in the U.S.

Critics of employment-based visa programs have relied on distorted statistics in their attacks. The foreign national population at financial institutions (and other major U.S. employers) consists of a very small percentage of the total workforce. For example, in 2007, among major U.S. financial institutions, only 0.0% to 0.74% of the entire workforce held H-1B visas. Having access to the best candidate helps U.S. companies be more competitive and productive. At a time when the economy is striving to rebound, barring U.S. companies access to the most qualified job applicants, particularly those coming out of U.S. graduate programs, will hinder recovery.

Senator Sanders' H-1b amendment would send the wrong signal to voters that Congress prefers to play politics by enacting symbolic and ineffective measures rather than serious and effective economic stimulus measures.

Sincerely,

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