



To whom it may concern,

We are technology executives, entrepreneurs, and business leaders from across the country who have joined FWD.us Innovation Councils to advocate for reforming our broken immigration system. We know that highly-skilled immigrants grow our economy, create American jobs, and boost wages for native-born workers. We also stand for a pathway to legal status for the undocumented immigrants who are a cornerstone of our economy. As applications open for H-1B visas, we recognize that immigration has long been our country's greatest competitive advantage, and call on our representatives in Congress to take steps to reform our legal immigration system.

The shortage of talented STEM workers in the U.S. presents a serious challenge to companies looking to drive America's global leadership in innovation. In our increasingly globalized economy, American companies require highly-specialized workers in order to succeed. When immigrant employees help fill this crucial gap, American workers benefit, too. For example, for every 100 H-1B visas awarded, an additional 183 jobs are created for U.S. citizens. And for every 100 international STEM graduates who enter the American workforce, an additional 262 American jobs are created.

Yet our immigration system creates countless barriers for these workers who would complement our workforce. Over the past couple of years, the H-1B visa cap has ensured that only roughly 30% of applicants have been able to work in the U.S. We expect this year to be no different. Every year, we graduate the best and brightest STEM students in the world from our universities. But far too often, we force these graduates to return to their native countries to compete against us. If we want to ensure the next Facebook or Google is founded in the U.S., we need to put these graduates on a fast track to becoming American citizens.

Immigrants aren't just the workers helping our companies succeed; they are also the entrepreneurs creating new jobs and innovations for our economy. Immigrants founded companies at an incredibly high rate, and research from the National Foundation for American Policy shows immigrants created 51% of Americans startups valued at more than \$1 billion. Immigrant entrepreneurs are a wellspring of job creation and innovation for the U.S., yet we force these individuals to jump through myriad hoops in order to grow their companies here. It's time we created an immigration pathway that allows international entrepreneurs to more fully contribute to our economy.

Reforms to our immigration system would not just unleash the full economic power of international workers; they would also stamp out the current abuses of the system. Smart reforms would ensure that no company could use H-1Bs to employ more than 50% of its U.S.-based workforce, and restrict companies with substantial numbers of H-1B employees from placing these workers with a third party.



The bottom line is that Congress has failed to update the U.S.' high-skilled immigration system since 1990. That means entrepreneurs and companies are trying to create jobs in a pre-Cold War framework that existed before the advent of the Internet. Our current system is woefully outdated, and hinders our growth in a constantly-evolving global economy. It's time for Congress to prioritize growing our economy by reforming the immigration system to meet the demands of our modern workforce. We look forward to working with your offices to enact meaningful change on this issue.

Sincerely,

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