

H-1B Battle - American Engineers vs. Senior Democrats!

By [Dino Perrotti](#) on Sun, 02/11/2007 - 6:56pm

Leading Democrats struck American engineers with a powerful left-left combo before the opening bell of round 3 of the H-1B battle. Senator Kerry (D-MA) and Senator Kennedy (D-MA) [attempted to secretly add an amendment](#) to the Minimum Wage bill last week. This earmark would have massively increased the H-1B cap and could have dealt a death blow to countless engineering careers across the country. With the immigration bill still months away, two senior Democrats stepped into the ring to demonstrate where their allegiance lies. It looks like it may be "curtains" for the engineers of America.

First, senior Republican Senators Cornyn and Shadegg secretly attempted to earmark an H-1B increase into the India-Nuke bill. Now, senior Democratic Senators Kerry and Kennedy secretly attempt to do the same with the Minimum Wage bill. The President campaigns in favor of expanding the program while his administration has not been enforcing the current cap.

For the last several years, ordinary citizens have been begging the government to reform the program, yet their voices are muted by those in power. Why would all of these Senators secretly attempt to amend H-1B provisions onto bills which are completely unassociated with immigration? It would appear to the average voter that tech company lobbyists wield unimaginable influence and control over the very highest levels of our government.

It looks like a duck

It hardly seems necessary to even continue this battle. After all, the fight is fixed. The H-1B cap has not been enforced under this administration, so why would Kerry and Kennedy bother to attack middle-class engineers when they are already de facto defeated?

The Democrats are supposed to be attempting to reach out to the middle-class by raising the minimum wage. The truth is that the minimum wage only affects people living at the poverty level. It should be raised, but so should the salaries of America's professionals, who are feeling squeezed by politics such as this. Engineering salaries have been stagnant for the last decade due to the H-1B law and outsourcing.

Why would these two senior Democrats make the same "secret" move that the senior Republicans just tried? Perhaps members of both parties are competing for those huge tech company campaign contributions but do not want the public to know about their actions. This leads us to confront the ugly question of whether legal variations of graft have deeply infected both major parties. If that is true, then who can you trust?

Who do you vote for when the most powerful members of both major parties are equally trying to destroy your livelihood? It seems that the days of voting straight down the line for one party or the other are over for U.S. citizens. Americans will have to pay closer attention to the specific positions that each candidate supports and votes for. Americans will also have to pay closer attention to the flow of campaign contributions to political candidates. And it is not easy to track all the players in this congressional battle.

Let's get ready to rumbllllllllllll...!

In one corner are the tech companies and their highly paid lobbyists who want to dramatically increase the H-1B cap without considering any reform at all. They're represented by some of the most powerful members of our government who support expanding the H-1B visa program as it is. They are:

President Bush (R-TX)
Senator Cornyn (R-TX)
Senator Shadegg (R-AZ)
Senator Kerry (D-MA)
Senator Kennedy (D-MA)
Senator Specter (R-PA)
Senator Boehner (R-OH)

In the other corner are American engineers and informed middle-class voters who want intelligent immigration reform. They are represented by a minority of members of both parties who are against expanding the H-1B visa program without reforming it first. They are:

Senator Webb (D-VA)
Senator Tancredo (R-CO)
Congressman Pascrell (D-NJ)

It looks like the odds of American engineers winning this fight are microscopically low. Dazed and confounded by the pervasive power of their opponents, they stand wearily in the middle of the ring, as if to simply prove they're still there. If

there are no more underhanded attempts to earmark any other bills, the fight will be won or lost fairly in the immigration reform bill coming up in congress. The Judiciary committees of the House and Senate are responsible for drafting any reform or adjustment to the cap.

Apocalypse Soon: The Judiciary Committee battles

If the [House of Representatives](#) members are not sympathetic to this cause, all may be lost. If they increase the cap, and the Senate follows suit, engineers may again be forced out of their jobs and out of their professions. If that happens, American engineering careers will be knocked out for good. American students will be discouraged further from entering math and engineering fields. Tech companies will get their cheap labor and America will have lost her soul. The stakes could not be any higher.

Many new House members are largely unaware that there are H-1B problems. Voters in the states listed below have the most power to influence the first draft of the H-1B immigration reform bill. Anyone who lives in one of these states and wants to be a part of this fight, should [contact their representatives](#). These are the states with the most House members in the Judiciary Committee:

Florida

Hon. Wasserman Schultz (D)

Hon. Keller (R)

Hon. Wexler (D)

Hon. Feeney (R)

California

Hon. Berman (D)

Hon. Lofgren (D)

Hon. Waters (D)

Hon. Sánchez (D)

Hon. Sherman (D)

Hon. Schiff (D)

Hon. Gallegly (R)

Hon. Lungren (R)

Hon. Issa (R)

Virginia

Hon. Boucher (D)

Hon. Goodlatte (R)

Hon. Scott (D)

Hon. Forbes (R)

This is a list of members of the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#):

Patrick J. Leahy, CHAIRMAN (D-VT)

Arlen Specter, RANKING MEMBER, (R-PA)

Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA)

Charles E. Schumer (D-NY)

Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE)

Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT)

Herb Kohl (D-WI)

Russell D. Feingold (D-WI)

Charles E. Grassley (R-IA)

Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)

Jon Kyl (R-AZ)

Jeff Sessions (R-AL)

Lindsey Graham (R-SC)

Richard J. Durbin (D-IL)

John Cornyn (R-TX)

Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)

Sam Brownback (R-KS)

Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)

Tom Coburn (R-OK)

The above men and women are the political warriors who will decide the fate of the next major H-1B battle. It doesn't look good for engineers. Many of the members of these committees are highly funded by tech company lobbyists. However, new members of congress who may not be members of this committee, but have broad support among voters, may also become powerful players in this battle.

Mr. Webb goes to Washington

Is there any member of congress who has the "right stuff" to make a difference in Washington? Is there an American who has the proper qualifications, someone who is not beholden to special interests groups, and someone we can trust? One person is newly elected Senator Jim Webb, an intelligent military man with a son in Iraq and a genuine concern for the middle-class. He does not believe in the myth of the high-skilled labor shortage and wants to reform the H-1B program. He may soon become a leader in congress and his honor is beyond reproach. Jim Webb is proof that elections can be won without receiving massive campaign contributions from special interests groups.

Senator Webb showed his mettle when, instead of getting seduced by President Bush's presence, he confronted the president on the Iraq war. The President insisted on asking Webb about his son, who is currently serving in Iraq. "That's between me and my boy Mr. President", Webb told the the President. At that moment, Senator Webb sent a message to senior members of the government that he is there to do the people's business. With a few more people like Jim Webb, Americans might actually be able to wrestle back control of the country from the tight grips of big business.

Round 3: Fight recap

So to recap, the tech companies have in their corner, the President and most senior members of congress. American engineers have in their corner, only a few newer members of congress, a few awakening news outlets, and an active grass-roots movement.

American engineers may want to just throw in the towel and begin to look for other types of work at this point. But the fight's not over yet, in fact, this may actually be a victory for American engineers and other high-skilled professionals. If the Minimum Wage bill passes without another attempt to slip in an H-1B provision, then American engineers and the middle-class will win this round. The larger battle may still seem all but lost, but American engineers have a not-so-secret weapon of their own.

Right makes might

American engineers may have one indomitable defense in this brawl. They have the moral high ground. It's hard to beat a fighter who's fighting for a just cause. Many [government reports](#) have reported continuing abuse and corruption within the H-1B visa program. Many victims of abuse and experts in the field have testified to congress about such abuses in the system. Millions of Americans empathize with this battle as part of a larger war on the middle-class. It will be difficult for politicians to face their voters, debating in favor of blindly expanding this program. Eventually enough voters will become informed and elect new leaders accordingly. Then maybe graft will be eliminated or at least marginalized in our government.

Dubai Ports + amnesty = H-1B

Like the Dubai Ports deal, this is a major homeland security concern that does not sit well with the public. Like the Amnesty bill proposed last year, this issue pits the will of the voters against the actions of their representatives. Voters are getting frustrated with the hypocritical actions within their government. How can politicians talk about a war on terror while they remain mute about hundreds of thousands of visas from the Middle-East and Southeast Asia which are rubber-stamped by the department of immigration and homeland security each year? How can they blatantly state there is a skilled labor shortage when so many experts in the business say [none exists](#)? It is mind-boggling to the average person.

The H-1B debate is shaping up to be ground zero for the larger immigration battle soon to come. That is, of course if the debate is allowed to openly take place.

Stay tuned for more fight coverage.