

Return of
Friday 12



H-1B monster
November @ 15:17:57

The H-1B visa program allows American companies and universities to import foreign scientists, engineers and programmers. Unfortunately, it has no serious safeguards to protect American workers from being replaced and is abused to provide cheap foreign labor.

By *Jim Hightower*

Like an outer-space alien from a 1950's science fiction movie, the H -1B monster is back.

H -1B is an immigration classification that has allowed high-tech corporations to import hundreds-of-thousands of low-paid computer engineers, programmers and other skilled professionals from abroad, rather than paying the middle-class salaries earned by high-tech workers in America.

These visas have been a primary tool used by CEOs to bust the salary levels of high-tech jobs—the very jobs that, we were told, were to be the source of upward mobility and middle-class opportunity for our citizens.

At the height of the high-tech boom, greedheaded corporate executives wailed that they simply could not find enough Americans with the computer skills they needed, so it was imperative, they said, that they be allowed to bring in tech workers from India, Russia and elsewhere to fill the gap. This was pure horsehockey. Far from a shortage of qualified U.S. workers, people with top-notch skills were practically begging for jobs ... and being rejected. The industry executives were creating a false crisis for one reason: They wanted to displace well-paid Americans with foreign workers who would take a third or less in pay.

But, horsehockey prevailed. With their campaign contributions and lobbying clout, they got Congress to triple the number of H -1B visas issued each year—and many Americans soon found themselves training their foreign replacements.

Then came the high-tech bust of 2000-2001, and hordes of workers of all nationalities were dumped by the CEOs. The H -1B visa levels were no longer an issue and were quietly dropped. But now that the tech economy is picking up again, instead of hiring Americans, the CEOs are wailing the same old tune about “shortages,” demanding that Congress give them more H -1B visas to import cheap workers to fill the new jobs.

To help stop these greedheads from monstrously misusing our immigration laws, call WashTech: 206-528-6264. ||

Jim Hightower is the best-selling author of "Let's Stop Beating Around the Bush," on sale from Viking Press. For more information, visit JimHightower.com.