

Tech Industry Has Ulterior Motive Regarding H-1B Visas

by Phyllis Schlafly
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The technology industry has dispatched its fat-wallet lobbyists to demand that the new Congress vastly increase the number of foreign computer software techies and engineers who can be imported on H-1B visas. This demand is based on the claim that we suffer a labor shortage in those fields, but that's a bare-faced lie to erect a smoke screen around the real reasons.

Three reasons motivate the tech giants to use their political clout and political action committee contributions to increase H-1Bs:

1. Cost-cutting: H-1B visa holders are paid much less than Americans.
2. The influx of H-1B visa holders depresses the "prevailing wage" for all computer techies and engineers.
3. The hiring of H-1B visa holders prevents potential competition from Americans who might choose to work for other firms or start companies of their own.

H-1B visas are not for entrepreneurs or executives. They are for employees who are tied to the company that imports them, much like indentured servants, and are supposed to depart from the United States after a few years.

A technology industry coalition called Compete America gathered at Stanford University in November for a TechNet Innovation Summit, but the goal wasn't innovation. This coalition, backed by Microsoft, Intel and other computer giants, has sent a letter to every member of Congress calling for more H-1B visas so businesses can import Indian, Pakistani and Chinese engineers to fill U.S. jobs.

H-1B visa holders cut industry costs but do nothing to improve innovation. Most innovators are Americans, and the successful immigrant entrepreneurs the industry brags about did not come here as guest workers on H-1B visas, but entered as children and were educated in U.S. universities.

Current law allows industry to import 85,000 workers with H-1B visas a year, but industry lobbyists seek to double or triple that number. They would really like the Cornyn-Shadegg SKIL Bill -- known to engineers as the Kill Bill -- which could import 1.5 million underpaid workers with H-1B visas by 2013.

The computer giants have thrown down the gauntlet: If Congress doesn't provide more H-1Bs visas, they will outsource jobs. "Outsourcing is the perfect argument for increasing the numbers" of H-1Bs, said a Compete America representative.

But if it's really better to outsource, there is no need for H-1Bs. Nobel economist Milton Friedman labeled H-1B visas a government "subsidy" to enable employers to get workers at a lower wage.

The United States has more than enough engineers. After the dot-com bust in 2000, California's Silicon Valley lost about 100,000 engineering jobs. Many of those who lost jobs remain unemployed, underemployed or have taken jobs in other industries.

Research by professor Norman Matloff of the University of California Davis confirms that there is no shortage of U.S. engineers or computer techies. If there were a shortage, salaries would be going up, but starting salaries for bachelor's degree graduates in computer science and electrical engineering, adjusted for inflation, are flat or falling.

A study by the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University also found that there is no shortage of U.S. engineers. Eighty percent of respondents to a Pratt survey say U.S. engineering jobs are filled within four months, and 88 percent didn't offer signing bonuses.

Many companies hire student engineers from India and China with only two or three years of college and then train them in their own facilities. U.S. students with two or three years of college get no job offers.

Much of the Compete America discussion involved blaming the U.S. educational system and the fact that fewer U.S. students are going into math and computer sciences. Yes, U.S. students have figured out that our engineers have a bleak employment future because of insourcing foreigners and outsourcing manufacturing.

The Compete America globalists are not interested in preserving America as the greatest nation and economy in the world, or in protecting American industry or jobs or universities or national security. They rejoice in economic redistribution from rich and prosperous nations to other countries around the world.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates spoke for the globalists: "The United States has been spoiled by being a global leader for so long that there may be an adjustment. We've got to get used to the fact that our relative share of everything -- our ability to exercise unilateral decision-making, military power and economic power -- won't be as out of line with our 5 percent share of world population as it is today."

Anyone who rejoices that the United States is losing its pre-eminence and distributing our wealth around the rest of the world must have lost all appreciation for the Yankee ingenuity essential to our prosperity. H-1B visas are a form of servitude that offends the

free enterprise that made the United States the economic world leader.

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