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View From Lodi, CA: Bill Gates Strongarms Senate Into Selling Out American Tech Workers

By [Joe Guzzardi](#)

During the last several months, I have written several columns about [work visas](#) and [religious visas](#).

Normally, after covering a topic in detail, I move onto new material. But last week, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee voted, in a shockingly [callous](#) and [venal manner](#), to hurt American workers by [raising the ceiling](#) for [H-1B visas](#) and employment [green cards](#).

Accordingly, I feel obligated to inform readers about how Congress continues to make it harder—if not impossible—for Americans to get good [middle-management jobs](#) in large corporations.

When the federal government conducts its business regarding work visas, it does so in virtual secrecy. Little hard news ever sees the light of day.

Here is the background on the latest outrage. Judiciary Chairman [Arlen Specter](#), as well as other Congressional committee chairmen, has been ordered by the White House to come up with either significant spending cuts or large revenue increases to offset the profligate [federal deficits](#) that have been mounting since 2001. The Judiciary's targeted savings, to be met within five years, is \$300 million.

This in itself is high irony since the White House blessed every dime of the spending

Specter, along with [Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy](#), devised a plan to sell hundreds of thousands of American professional jobs over the next several years to foreign workers by [increasing the numbers of H-1B visas issued](#) and raising the [fees charged](#) for them.

The final proposed Specter-Kennedy scheme would recapture unused H-1B visas from previous years and reissue up to 30,000 new visas annually with an added \$500 fee tacked on.

The fees, of course, would be paid by the corporate entity hiring the visa holder. As you can imagine, \$500 to blue chip companies is not even [lunch money](#).

The Judiciary Committee didn't discuss other considerations. The most obvious question that wasn't asked, except by California Senator [Dianne Feinstein](#), is whether America needs more foreign workers.

Feinstein said she had a problem with issuing thousands of new H-1B visas for [so-called skilled workers](#) since many of them will ultimately be hired by California's [computer technology sector](#).

Said Feinstein: **"I think we do our [own people](#) a disservice. There's been no hearing on this. No investigation. This is just a very controversial thing."**

And Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions added, **"It's not budget reconciliation. It's a policy change. As Sen. Feinstein said, what evidence is there that there is a crisis?"**

[JOENOTE to VDARE.COM readers: Two of the nation's most astute students of H-1B visa abuse, [Rob Sanchez](#), editor of [the Job Destruction Newsletter](#) and [Professor Norm Matloff](#) of the University of California, Davis are quick to point out what a colossal wishy-washy Feinstein is on visas and other immigration issues.

[And Matloff added that California's other senator, Barbara Boxer, is even worse. Matloff recalled that a Boxer aide once told him that she would never vote in favor of any kind of measure which restricts immigration, most definitely including the issue I asked him about, H-1B.]

Two other ludicrous details escaped the Committee.

First, the cost of running the U.S. visa system is already exorbitant. According to the [Citizenship and Immigration Services'](#) Lauren Mack, the nation loses [nearly \\$1 million daily](#) because of visa processing costs.

More visas simply add to the losses.

Second, the income generated by charging higher fees for the new visas doesn't amount to a bag of shells in terms of reducing the federal deficit.

According to Sanchez, the current federal budget is \$2.693 trillion. Visa sales will generate a measly \$133 million thus leaving the federal budget virtually unchanged at \$2.692 trillion.

When I asked Capitol Hill insiders to comment on how such a hurtful proposal could even be considered in light of a slowing economy and 14 million unemployed or underemployed Americans, the unsurprising answer was: **["Bill Gates."](#)**

[Roy Beck](#), executive director of [NumbersUSA.Com](#) told me:

"Microsoft is once again running the show up there. The whole plan came

from a Microsoft lobbyist whose colleagues are overpowering all the House and Senate leaders this week demanding that the tripling (maybe quadrupling) of employment-based green cards and H-1Bs goes through!”

Added Beck,

“This is a travesty for American students studying to enter scientific, engineering and high-tech fields, as well as to those Americans who have worked hard to become masters of their craft.”

(Read Beck’s complete analysis here: [NumbersUSA Releases Numerical Consequences of Senate Committee Plan to Sell U.S. Skilled Jobs to Foreign Workers](#), which details projections for as many as 350,000 new immigrants annually including 100,000 family members of new visa holders.)

And [Kim Berry](#), president of the [Programmers Guild](#), observed:

“This is a bake sale on the deck of the *Titanic* and American workers are the cupcakes. Why not sell all 200 million American jobs, and raise \$100 billion?”

The lobbying effort was led by [Ken Wasch](#), president, [Software and Industry Information Association](#). (e-mail him using [this link](#)).

Expect many twists and turns before the Senate votes on the final version of Specter-Kennedy.

In the meantime, with election 2006 looming, the Senators who are interested in keeping their jobs should consider that according to a [June 2005 Zogby poll](#), 71 percent of Americans think they are doing a lousy job.

All anyone has to do is look at the Specter-Kennedy proposal to see why Americans are so disgusted.

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