

January 29, 2013

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hatch,

On behalf of the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI), I write to express our strong support for your legislation, the Immigration Innovation (I-Squared) Act of 2013. ITI represents the nation's leading information and communications technology companies, including computer hardware and software, Internet services, and wireless networking companies. ITI is the voice of the high-tech community, advocating for policies that advance U.S. leadership in technology and innovation, open access to new and emerging markets, support e-commerce expansion, and enhance domestic and global competition.

Our immigration system does not fit today's highly competitive global economy. Most of our nation's immigration laws were written in 1986 and 1990, when our economy was one-third the size it is today. As a result, current immigration laws have become severe impediments to the professional development of skilled talent that could start new businesses, create new jobs, and grow our economy. In fact, in the tech sector, we are creating jobs faster than we can fill them. Tens of thousands of high-paying jobs remain unfilled. A report we released last fall with the Partnership for a New American Economy and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that in many skilled occupations, from petroleum engineers to statisticians, the unemployment rate is virtually non-existent, which means we face significant skilled worker shortages in our country.

We are in dire need of a renewed skilled immigration system that will give U.S.-based employers the ability to attract, develop, and retain the world's best and highly educated individuals so that we can continue to innovate and compete in a global marketplace. The benefits to the overall economy of skilled immigration are clear. In the tech industry alone, companies hire on average roughly five additional non-immigrant workers for every high-skilled immigrant hired. Indeed, from 1995 to 2005, more than half of Silicon Valley start-ups were founded or co-founded by an immigrant, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs and growth in our economy. Yet, our broken immigration system stymies such talent. If an employer today sponsored a permanent resident visa, or green card, for a foreign-born worker from China or India, the wait time is certain to exceed well beyond 10 years. Increasing numbers of studies and surveys have shown that our broken immigration system is a major contributing factor to a reverse brain drain.

It is against this backdrop that ITI welcomes the introduction of the bipartisan Immigration Innovation, or I-Squared, Act of 2013. This important, long overdue legislation would upgrade our immigration system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy in several ways.

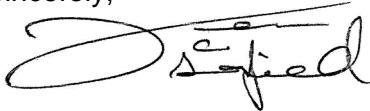
First, it will reset the number of temporary H-1B visas and allow their availability to adjust in order to meet market demands.

Second, it reforms the green card system in ways that will reduce the current backlog, and enable the most exceptional and highly skilled foreign-born individuals to innovate, start new companies, and advance their professional development and success in the U.S.

Third, the bill reflects our industry's commitment to improving the long-term development of our domestic math and science workforce by creating a new science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and worker retraining initiative. We have all seen the sobering numbers: last year, only 45 percent of U.S. high school graduates were prepared for college level math, and only 30 percent were ready for college level science. It is in our national interest to ensure our near term efforts to reform our skilled immigration system will aid in improving our longer-term effort to build a competitive STEM workforce.

The I-Squared Act of 2013 is an early and essential contribution to the larger effort to revamp our overall immigration system. Congressional approval of this legislation is necessary if the U.S. economy is to truly realize its full entrepreneurial and innovative potential. We commend you for your diligence on this important issue and urge both the Senate and House to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Dean C. Garfield  
President and CEO  
Information Technology Industry Council