
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8004

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senators Shin, Kastama, Hobbs, Swecker, Schoesler, Morton, Berkey, McDermott, Jarrett, Oemig, Honeyford, Marr, McAuliffe, Tom, and Pridemore

Read first time 01/23/09. Referred to Committee on Economic Development, Trade & Innovation.

1 TO THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
7 represent and petition as follows:

8 WHEREAS, Worker training programs in the United States, from
9 certificate programs to advanced college degrees, are not producing
10 enough qualified domestic workers to meet the growing employer demand;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Domestic highly skilled workers in high-demand fields such
13 as science, technology, and engineering, are currently unavailable at
14 sufficient levels to meet employer demand; and

15 WHEREAS, As recently as 2007, sixty percent of Washington employers
16 surveyed in all industries reported difficulty finding qualified
17 workers; and

18 WHEREAS, The H-1B visa brings foreign highly skilled workers to the
19 United States on a temporary basis; and

1 WHEREAS, H-1B visas are currently limited to sixty-five thousand
2 new visas per year; and

3 WHEREAS, There are unmet demands to increase the highly skilled
4 workforce in the United States, companies are choosing to create jobs
5 outside the United States; and

6 WHEREAS, The Commission on Immigration Reform recommended in their
7 1995 report that United States employers be required to pay a
8 substantial fee to demonstrate bona fide need for foreign workers; and

9 WHEREAS, The Commission on Immigration Reform also recommended in
10 their 1995 report that fees paid by United States employers to
11 demonstrate a need for foreign workers be invested in certified
12 workforce and training initiatives to increase the competitiveness of
13 United States workers and to satisfy the unmet need for a highly
14 skilled workforce domestically; and

15 WHEREAS, The Washington State Legislature recognizes the need to
16 help United States companies fill high-demand positions in the United
17 States while simultaneously training more domestic workers for such
18 highly skilled jobs;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
20 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States
21 House of Representatives, and the United States Senate and House of
22 Representatives actively support legislation:

23 (1) Increasing the number of available H-1B visas; and

24 (2) Mandating that companies hiring highly skilled workers through
25 the H-1B visa program pay the sum of ten thousand dollars per foreign
26 worker, to go toward training domestic workers for highly skilled jobs.

27 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
28 transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United
29 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
30 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of
31 Washington.

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