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For more information:
Semiconductor Industry Association
Ian Steff
202-429-1413

Senators Boxer and Gregg Realize Critical Need to Retain Extraordinary Talent in the United States

Bipartisan Legislation Would Exempt Highly Educated Students from Annual EB Green Card Limits

San Jose, CA – June 5, 2008 – The Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) called on the U.S. Senate to exempt certain highly educated, foreign-born graduates of U.S. universities from annual employment-based (EB) green card limits, as proposed in legislation introduced today by Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Judd Gregg (R-NH). The bipartisan bill would allow U.S. semiconductor companies to retain critically needed talented professionals who make important contributions to American innovation.

Specifically, the bill would exempt highly educated, foreign-born students earning an advanced degree in science, technology, engineering or mathematics from a U.S. university from the annual EB green card limit. Last month, Representatives Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) and Chris Cannon (R-UT) introduced a companion measure in the House of Representatives (H.R. 6039).

“Semiconductors are America’s second largest export because our highly educated workforce designs the most advanced devices in the world,” said SIA President George Scalise. “The legislation introduced today by Senators Boxer and Gregg recognizes the importance of retaining this top talent, particularly after these students have graduated from U.S. universities. We strongly urge Congress to enact this common sense legislation this year. This is an opportunity for our elected leaders to show they are serious about taking steps to ensure America’s technology leadership through innovation.”

Backlogs in the EB green card system are well documented, with wait times for some foreign-born professionals spanning six to 10 years. During that wait, an employee’s life is in limbo; promotion, mobility and international travel are extremely difficult. Green card backlogs also place U.S. employers at a disadvantage in the worldwide competition for talent as competitor nations have stepped up efforts to attract these highly sought-after professionals. SIA has partnered with IEEE-USA, which represents electrical and electronics engineers, to advocate for EB green card reform.

“With U.S. universities awarding half of master’s and 70 percent of Ph.D.s in electrical engineering to foreign nationals, it is clear that America also needs a long-term solution for retaining this talent,” continued Scalise. “We look forward to working with both the House and Senate to secure passage of this bill and ensure that broader reforms of the immigration system for highly educated professionals are enacted this year.”

About the SIA

The SIA is the leading voice for the semiconductor industry and has represented U.S. semiconductor companies since 1977. Collectively, the chip industry employs a domestic workforce of 216,000 people. More information about the SIA can be found at www.sia-online.org.