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Semiconductor Industry Welcomes Bipartisan Introduction of “New American Innovators Act”

H.R. 5634 Would Help Address One Part of America’s Competitiveness Challenge

San Jose, CA – March 17, 2008 – The Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) today welcomed the introduction of the “New American Innovators Act” (H.R. 5634), which would provide a streamlined path toward permanent residency for foreign-born Ph.D. graduates from U.S. colleges and universities. The bipartisan bill, introduced by Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Michael McCaul (R-TX), would help address the problem U.S. employers face in hiring and retaining the world’s best and brightest.

"America should embrace the highly educated foreign-born professionals graduating from its universities, not send them abroad to compete against us. This bill is a step forward in addressing the challenge U.S. companies face in hiring much-needed talent," said George Scalise, President of SIA. "We commend Representatives Kennedy and McCaul for their bipartisan effort. At the same time we urge Congress to complete action on legislation that addresses other impediments to U.S. competitiveness, including extending the lapsed R&D tax credit and investing in basic research."

Exempting foreign-born Ph.D. graduates from the current restrictive green card limits is important because 70 percent of Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from U.S. universities in 2007 were foreign-born. Many of these graduate students conduct the basic research at U.S. universities essential to U.S. leadership in the semiconductor industry. This underscores the importance of both ensuring that U.S. visa policy allows continued access to the best and brightest minds while at the same time making substantial investments in basic research conducted at U.S. universities.

Semiconductor industry leaders in Washington, D.C. this week expressed frustration that Congress has not yet reformed the immigration system for highly educated workers, nor acted on or funded other critical innovation agenda measures, including the R&D tax credit and basic research.

“Semiconductors are America’s second largest export and drive U.S. economic growth. If the United States is to remain competitive in the global marketplace, it is essential that Congress make American innovation a priority,” said Scalise. “SIA will continue to urge Congress to act now on the unfinished components of the innovation agenda.”

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.