



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

April 5, 2013

The Honorable Robert Menendez
528 Senate Hart Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Menendez,

The National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), on behalf of the 600,000 graduate and professional students we represent, writes to express our gratitude for all you have done to find a bipartisan solution to our nation's immigration problems.

As we approach the unveiling of the immigration compromise, NAGPS wishes to express the perspectives of our nation's graduate and professional students. Our nation boasts the finest opportunities for higher education in the world, and so it is no surprise we attract the best and brightest international students to our institutions. These international students quickly become contributors to their communities, schools and the growth and development of our nation. In 2011, approximately 15% of graduate students were foreign nationals, 36% of all science and engineering PhDs were awarded to foreign nationals at U.S. universities., and 76% of all patents from America's top ten patent generating universities had a foreign born inventor [1][2][3].

Currently, there are not enough H1-B visas available to U.S. educated foreign nationals with advanced degrees. While nearly three-fourths of all foreign doctoral recipients plan to stay in the United States to find employment, the five and ten year stay rates for these students are estimated at 64% and 66% [4]. We believe that the foreign nationals we have invested in through our education system should be given more opportunities to remain and work in the United States. We encourage you to expand the number of H1-B visas and green cards available for foreign nationals who earned an advanced degree in the United States.

Our nation's graduate and professional students also include those students who qualify under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. These students have been in the United States since childhood and attended our schools and universities. For many of these students they struggle to enter and finish graduate and professional programs because of a lack of access to scholarships, fellowships and loans. We encourage you to consider undocumented students under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and acknowledge the contributions they have already made to our country and the difficulties they have endured.

While many debates remain, history will show that your bipartisan efforts produced a better immigration policy for our nation. Please feel free to contact us at any time, should you require graduate and professional students' perspectives on issues or legislation affecting education.

Sincerely,

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NAGPS members:
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Arkansas State University
Armstrong Atlantic State University
Auburn University
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Washington State University
Washington University in St. Louis
Western Michigan University
Xavier University

[1] <http://chronicle.com/article/Admissions-Offers-to-Foreign/128700/>

[2] <http://chronicle.com/article/US-Graduate-Schools-See/129679/>

[3] "Patent Pending: How Immigrants Are Reinventing the American Economy." Partnership for a New American Economy. <http://www.renewoureconomy.org/patent-pending>

[4] Finn, M.G. 2012. Stay Rates of Foreign Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities, 2009. Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education. <http://orise.orau.gov/files/sep/stay-rates-foreign-doctorate-recipients-2009.pdf>