



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

October 30, 2013

Speaker of the House John Boehner
United States House of Representatives
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) and the more than 600,000 graduate and professional students we represent across the United States on more than 90 campuses. I wish to express my sincere gratitude for all you have done to find a bipartisan solution to our nation's immigration problems. I also write to request that you consider H.R. 15, a bill very similar to the bi-partisan immigration bill passed in the Senate earlier this year.

Our nation boasts the finest opportunities for higher education in the world. Thus, it is no surprise that we attract the best and brightest international students to our institutions of higher education. In 2011, approximately 15% of graduate students were foreign nationals and these numbers continue to increase as universities accept an increasing number of international students^{1,2}.

Our nation's international graduate and professional students are members of our communities, leaders within their universities, and contributors to the growth and development of our nation. In 2011, 36% of all science and engineering PhDs were awarded to foreign nationals at U.S. universities. In 2011–2012 international students contributed \$21.8 billion to the U.S. economy and \$717.3 million to the state of Ohio³. At the same time, 76% of all patents from America's top 10 patent-generating universities had a foreign born inventor⁴. Additionally, businesses founded by immigrants—in many cases graduate and professional students—contribute \$1.3 billion annually to the Ohio economy⁵.

NAGPS supports comprehensive immigration reform that values the contributions made by our nation's international and undocumented DREAM Act students. NAGPS believes that 2013 is the year to improve our immigration system by passing comprehensive immigration reform that will advance our nation economically and intellectually. Estimates show that passing comprehensive immigration reform would add more than \$766 million to the Gross State Product of Ohio in 2014⁵. NAGPS wishes to express our platform and requests that you bring H.R. 15 to a vote in the House of Representative's floor and consider the following recommendations:

1) Allow for domestic renewal of type F student visas.

Currently Section 4103(c) of H.R. 15 allows for the renewal of a number of visa types within the United States. Unfortunately, this subsection does not include type F student visas. Allowing domestic renewal of type F visas would circumvent the unnecessary time and financial burdens currently required for students to revalidate their academic visas. Currently, many students are prevented from presenting the results of their research at international conferences because of the costs of associated with visa renewal⁶. Allowing for student visa renewals in the United States could minimize costs associated with visa renewals overseas and allow for more robust security and oversight of visa renewals within the United States. The experience and expertise of domestic State Department and Department of Homeland Security officials provides for greater security throughout the visa revalidation process. Providing F visa holders with the option of domestic revalidation also has the potential to drastically reduce the cost and workload on our consulates abroad.

NAGPS member schools:

Arizona State University
Arkansas State University
Armstrong Atlantic State University
Auburn University
Baylor University
Bentley University
Boston University
Bryn Mawr College
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Chatham University
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Drexel University
Duke University
East Carolina University
East Tennessee State University
Eastern Illinois University
Emerson College
Florida Atlantic University
Florida International University
Florida State University
George Mason University
Grand Valley State University
Harvard University
High Point University
Johns Hopkins University
Kent State University
Loyola University Maryland
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Missouri University of Science and Technology
North Carolina State University
Northern Arizona University
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
Oklahoma State University
Old Dominion University
Pennsylvania State University
Regent University
Rice University
Southern University
St. Cloud State University
St. Louis University
Stony Brook University
Syracuse University
Texas A&M University
Texas Tech University
Tufts University
University of Akron
University of Alabama, Birmingham
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
University of Arizona
University of Arkansas, Little Rock
University of California
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Merced
University of California, San Diego
University of Central Florida
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Louisville
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Miami
University of Mississippi
University of Missouri
University of Missouri, St. Louis
University of Montana
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Nevada, Reno
University of New England
University of New Haven
University of North Texas
University of Notre Dame
University of Oklahoma
University of Pittsburgh
University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus
University of South Dakota
University of South Florida
University of Southern California
University of Tennessee Knoxville
University of Toledo
Virginia Commonwealth University
Washington State University
Washington University in St. Louis
Western Michigan University
Xavier University

2) Increase the number of H1-B visas for U.S. educated foreign nationals.

Currently, the number of H1-B visas available to U.S. educated foreign nationals with advanced degrees is inadequate. While nearly three-fourths of all foreign doctoral recipients plan to contribute to the growth of the American economy by working in the U.S., the five and ten year stay rates for these students are estimated at 64% and 66%, respectively⁷. Visa caps have consistently been reached in recent years, and only a small portion of green cards go to professionals with advanced degrees. We encourage you to expand the number of H1-B visas and green cards available for foreign nationals that receive an advanced degree in the United States. We support the measures in H.R. 15 that raises the H1-B visa cap from 65,000 to a fluctuating cap that ranges from 115,000 to 180,000 based on market demand and unemployment data.

3) Recognize the contribution of DREAM Act eligible students.

Because of their status, persons brought to the United States who are denied a path to citizenship are also denied the opportunity to pursue an education in America's public and private institutions of higher learning. The U.S. is in turn denied the potential economic and social benefits that would be generated from such an education. These persons deserve the opportunity to work and contribute to the country they consider home, as American citizens. We encourage you to support legislation that provides a pathway to citizenship similar to the one laid out in H.R. 15.

Thank you again for your continued efforts to move our nation forward with comprehensive immigration reform. Should you wish to speak with NAGPS further regarding graduate and professional student issues please don't hesitate to contact me.

With sincere thanks,



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