Immigration Reform — Or is it?

**IEEE-USA Supports Simpson Immigration Reform Bill**

Recent debate over the employment-based admissions provisions of Sen. Alan Simpson's immigration bill has generated more heat than light, with opponents making reckless charges that the legislation would cripple American competitiveness and cause US businesses to send high-tech jobs overseas. Apparently, these opponents hope to scuttle reasonable reform by fueling the fears of working Americans concerned more than ever about losing their jobs — fears, ironically, which are exacerbated by our current, out-of-control immigration system.

In the view of the US Activities division of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (IEEE-USA), Simpson's legislation will establish a much-needed balance between employers' needs for access to high-tech professionals and the public need to safeguard job opportunities, wages and working conditions in the United States — for US citizens and for foreign nationals who are legally admitted to work in this country.

Some opponents of Simpson's bill contend that it will cripple US economic and technological competitiveness by preventing employers from hiring the cutting-edge talent they need to survive in global markets. We disagree. The bill continues on p. 4

**Background**

- The Immigration Act of 1990 raised the ceilings on permanent, employment based admissions and assigned high priority to the entry of professional and skilled workers.
- The Act also streamlined temporary admissions procedures.
- In the period from 1986-1994, the number of annual admissions for engineers and scientists on both permanent and temporary visas more than doubled, from 11,000 to 22,000 (permanent) and from 28,000 to 60,000 (temporary).
- From 1990-1994, engineers were experiencing unprecedented levels of unemployment.
- The purchasing power of engineering salaries reached a 20 year low in 1994 (American Association of Engineering Societies).
- AT&T recently announced thousands of layoffs of professional and skilled workers — and has applied to the Department of Labor for immigrant visas.
- American International Group and Sea-Land Services fired hundreds of US workers, and required them to train the lower-paid foreign workers who replaced them.
- Last summer, under the temporary visa program, the Department of Labor approved hiring computer programmers for $4.50 an hour, a fraction of what these programmers usually earn.

**Entry-Level Employment Assistance on the Web**

The IEEE-USA World Wide Web homepage <http://www.ieee.org/usab/> is now hosting a special section of employment assistance resources for engineering students and new graduates to use in their job search. Links to web books such as the "College Grad Hob Hunter," as well as the Entry Level Job Assistant and the Graduate Assistantship Directory provide tools and advice tailored to the needs of the entry-level engineer.

This area (and all others) of the IEEE-USA Employment Assistance Web is being updated as new information becomes available. Check it out and if you have any suggestions, please contact Bill Anderson.
IEEE-USA Employment Assistance Services

Member Services
Cybersearching for a Job Employment Assistance on the Web

"This is the place to find a job" according to Science & Engineering Network News. Free access through the IEEE-USA homepage, the Employment Assistance Web pages provides both the experienced and entry-level engineer, as well as tips on conducting a job search with tips on networking, working with employers, networking with colleagues and friends, interviewing, evaluating the compensation package, coping with job loss and knowing your legal rights in the employment process. More than just another job search book, this guide has been written particularly for engineers and technical professionals.

Free IEEE-USA Employment Assistance Information and Services
Unemployed US members (non-student members) may obtain a packet of information to assist them in their job search. This packet includes information on a variety of job search services and a free copy of the Employment Guide for Engineers and Scientists. For all members, IEEE provides (on loan) the videotape "How to Get a Better Job Quickly," information on accessing the Internet with free demonstration software, reviews of various job search tools and advice on local employment assistance programs such as job skills banks.

Resume Referral Services
IEEE has entered an agreement with Resume Link to endorse their ElectroScience Resume Referral Service, a national database that is accessed by employers with job openings. This service is free. Members who may submit their resumes to Resume Link via World Wide Web at http://www.resume-link.com/ or by calling 614-572-0920.

Job Bank USA
IEEE members may participate in the Job Bank USA employment database at a special discounted rate. Job Bank USA is an all-purpose employment resource that allows individuals to maintain a personalized electronic resume. Each admission is matched against detailed search criteria from client companies. In addition, participating individuals receive access to Job Bank USA's Career Fitness program and quarterly newsletter. Call 800-298-HISA.

Career Alternatives
The IEEE-USA homepage provides information on a range of career related issues including:
- Consultants' Networks
- Employment opportunities
- Career development and policy issues.

Reduced Rates for Unemployed Members
Unemployed members of IEEE are entitled to a 50% reduction in annual membership dues during the term of their unemployment. Contact 800-878-IEEE.

Kinko's Copy Center Discount
IEEE members receive a 10% discount at Kinko's Copy Centers nationwide. This discount applies to most Kinko's services including copies, computer rental, desktop publishing, reproduction and stationery supplies.

Insurance
IEEE provides members with a variety of insurance programs, including term life and major medical. Call 800-878-IEEE.

Section and Society Services
Regional Employment Assistance Coordinators
Employment Assistance Coordinators are available to assist members and IEEE Sections, Societies and Student Branches with job search programs and services.

Funding for Programs
The IEEE-USA Employment Assistance Committee can provide a limited amount of funding to support Section, Society, or Region employment assistance programs.

FRONTLINE Report on Employment Assistance
This bimonthly newsletter contains information on IEEE's national employment assistance efforts, successful Section and Society programs and employment news from around the world. Available as an autorepsonse file.

Job Seekers Workshop
The IEEE-USA Employment Assistance Committee sponsors the workshop "Successful Job-Hunting Today" targeted to IEEE entities. This one-day workshop covers job search techniques such as networking, resume writing and interview.

"How-To" Guides
The IEEE-USA Employment Assistance Committee provides "how-to" guides for IEEE entities to help with employment assistance activities. Guides include information on establishing local skills banks, employer databases, jobseeker support groups and job fair help.

Accessing IEEE-USA Employment Assistance Services
World Wide Web
IEEE homepage
http://www.ieee.org/
IEEE-USA homepage
http://www.ieee.org/usab/

Autoresponse files
(send e-mail message -- no subject or test necessary -- file will be automatically returned)

Job Listing System
info@ieeusea.org, jobs@ieee.org, where "01" corresponds to IEEE Region 1, "02" to IEEE Region 2, through Region 6, "Other" is outside the US, and "cal" and "mass" are California and Massachusetts.

Employment assistance info@ieee.employmentinfo.org

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EAC "Proactive" Plans for 1996

by Richard L. Riddell, Chairman

Over the last two years the USA Employment Assistance Committee has made tremendous progress in providing employment assistance services to our members under the excellent leadership of Jean Eason, 1994/95 EAC Chair. The National Job Search Service, the Unemployed Member Survey, EAC Workshops at the 1994, 1995 PACE conferences, EAC Newsletters, FRONTLINE are a few notable examples of tangible services provided to our members during the past two years by the EAC Chairman. On behalf of the members and staff of EAC, I would like to express our appreciation to Jean for a job well done and to wish her our best as she moves on to her new job with USAB. I am happy to report that Jean has agreed to continue with EAC as a resource member.

Just when we think that the trend of unemployment for our members has been stopped, we are starting to hear that the propaganda put out by Washington and the media about how robust the economy is, we are suddenly brought back to reality by those little announcements that "it ain't over yet."

Announcements like restructuring, downsizing, plant closing, buyouts, and layoffs at many of our major employers of power, communication, computers, and software make it hard to believe that things have improved that much for our members. Another concern that is longstanding is that working technical professionals have in their replacement by foreign nationals. This has recently received national attention in political circles as well as the media. Regardless of the terminology used, recruiting is still a problem, and some, devastating. So what are we do? At the national level, we have to help members who become unemployed for whatever reason find employment.

1996 plans
The EAC will be meeting in Charleston, SC in March to develop our plan for the year. As a general comment I would like to see us become more pro-active in all employment services. We can begin to see how we can improve our meeting in Charleston. The recent downsizing at the Charleston Naval Base has created serious employment problems for many local electronics careerists. I hope that the EAC can find out first hand what the Sections are doing to help the membership and what IEEE-USA can do. As far as specific items to be considered for action in 1996, I offer the following:

1. Continue the IEEE-USA Job Listing Service. This is the only service of its kind and is used by people such as in interactive search capability on the IEEE-USA Employment Bulletin Board containing thousands of employers. The EAC has recently advertised the JLS to electronics industry recruiters and users of this service to seek employment of foreign nationals.

2. Continue to develop the IEEE-USA Entry Level Employment Assistance Page on WWW and solicit feedback from graduates students for its usefulness.

3. Continue publication of FRONTLINE newsletter to Section and PACE Chairmen highlighting EAC programs and successful local employment assistance efforts.

4. Continue and improve communication with USAB about the availability of employment assistance services via electronic media (IEEE Com, Gopher, Wide World Web, etc.) and in IEEE and Trade news media ( Spectrum, The Institute, Impact, EE Times and etc.).

5. Develop a guide to help members evaluate early retirement and employment separation (layoff, buyout) options and actions prior to the final termination decision.

6. Explore ways to use the Internet to access job openings.

7. Develop a brochure on the employment assistance services available from IEEE-USA for distribution at USAB meetings (see related article on p. 2).

8. Develop a presentation of available employment services.

I am sure that the committee members and staff of IEEE that would like to see added and accomplished in 1996. The most important of these is that you are asked to provide or develop it.

As always, if you or your members have ideas for employment assistance programs or services, please contact us. Or, if you would like to know more about the services we provide, just let us know and you or your members, or some tips on successful job searching, do not hesitate to get in touch with anyone on the Committee.
essentially maintains the status quo with respect to permanent employment-based admissions, which have been averaging around 90,000 a year. Furthermore, the bill does not reduce the current 65,000 annual cap on temporary employment-based admissions under the H-1B specialty-occupation visa program.

Nor, as other opponents contend, is Simpson’s bill “anti-immigrant.” Far from it. The Immigration Reform Act includes provisions that will help to safeguard wages and working conditions for legal immigrants as well as for US citizens. As part of an international professional society with substantial numbers of foreign-born members in the United States, IEEE-USA firmly agrees with Simpson that it is just as wrong to exploit immigrants as native-born Americans.

The Immigration Reform Act proposes to balance the legitimate needs of employers and workers in cutting-edge, high-technology industries in three important ways. First, US employers will have to test the domestic labor market for availability of US workers before they can hire foreign workers. Second, they will have to pay foreign workers actual or prevailing US wages, whichever are higher. And, third, they will not longer be allowed to replace American workers with foreign workers who will accept low pay in order to enter or remain in the United States.

These provisions will enable employers to hire foreign workers based on a demonstrable lack of appropriately qualified American workers, not simply because it is easier or cheaper to hire foreign workers. They will also provide much-needed incentives for employers to develop and make better use of America’s own engineers, scientists and computer specialists.

We think that the legislation provides a solid basis for a properly regulated system of legal immigration, a system that — in the words of [the late] Barbara Jordan, chair of the bipartisan US Commission on Immigration Reform — will enhance the benefits of immigration and help to protect against potential harms.

Finally, we feel compelled to respond to the not-so-subtle threats that employers will move American jobs offshore if they are denied unlimited access to foreign workers. In fact, they can do that now. In our view, such employers don’t want a high-tech workforce in the developing world. Rather, they want a first-rate technical workforce in the United States that will accept Third-World wages and working conditions. That’s no way to develop the workforce that America will need to grow and prosper in the 21st Century.

Companies Oppose Employment-based Immigration Reform

IEEE-USA Chair Joel B. Snyder and Workforce Committee Chair Roger Madden met on March 5 with representatives from Intel, Motorola, and Xerox to discuss IEEE-USA’s position on legal immigration reform. Snyder praised the companies for their commitment to engineers’ continuing education, but asserted the need for legislative changes that would curtail abuses of the nation’s immigration system by less scrupulous employers.

On March 7, Sen. Alan Simpson threw his employment-based legal reform provisions over the side in an unsuccessful effort to blunt business community opposition to his legal reform bill (S. 1394). Subsequently the Judiciary Committee agreed to split Simpson’s bill into 2 parts. The Committee is marking up the illegal reform component this week (Mar. 25) and expects to mark-up the employmentless legal reform bill, next week. Both bills are expected to go to the floor in mid April.

Senator Kennedy (with encouragement from Senator Simpson) is preparing floor amendments designed to salvage some or all of the worker safeguard provisions contained in the original Simpson bill (the provisions that IEEE-USA has been supporting). IEEE-USA plans to work with other reform advocates to mobilize support for the Kennedy/Simpson amendments.

In the House, opponents are trying to split HR 2202 into illegal and legal parts and gut the already weak worker protections provisions in Titles V and VIII of the Smith bill.

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