

## **HIGH-SKILLED FOREIGN WORKERS NEEDED EVEN AS THE U.S. ECONOMY STALLS**

Some may ask, why should Congress raise the H-1B cap at a time when it seems the U.S. economy is stalling out or worse and when unemployment rates are on the rise. In response to this question it is important point out:

- While general macro economic indicators such as the unemployment rate appear to be on the rise, this does not translate into a growing pool of highly-skilled workers being available for high tech or other skill specific job openings.
- Studies show that foreign highly-skilled workers are an important stimulus to the U.S. economy, whether as a major component of innovative entrepreneurs in the engineering and technology sectors or as highly-skilled workers who create additional U.S. worker positions within high-tech companies.
- Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates who has testified to Congress on numerous occasions has noted that the pipeline of native U.S. engineers is not sufficient to meet the needs of employers. In order to help meet these pipeline needs, fees in the H-1B application process go towards National Science Foundation scholarships for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students in science and math and funding for K-12 science and math programs, training programs for U.S. workers, and to visa processing. However, employers have a current need for specific highly-skilled workers that can only be met by providing increased H-1B visa numbers.
- Bureau of Labor Statics numbers show that jobs in the tech sector remain strong with the average quarterly unemployment rate in 2007 around 2% (which is considered full employment). Coupled with impending baby-boomer retirements, these trends indicate that employment needs in the tech sector will continue to be high.
- The Labor Condition Application also provides protection for U.S. workers and the Department of Labor is actively holding employers accountable to statements made in their LCA's by conducting more audits. Furthermore, an H-1B dependent employer must state that they will not layoff any similarly employed U.S. worker within 90 says before and 90 days after the date the petition for an H-1B employee is filed.