

Fact Sheet: STEM Talent In Competition Bill

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The U.S. is facing a STEM skills shortage that is putting our global leadership position in the technology and innovation sectors at risk. The last several years have highlighted our vulnerabilities in regard to STEM skills and supply chains, and shined a light on how dependent the world is on China for technology-related manufacturing.

What Is the Current State of Advanced STEM Skills In the U.S.?

America is a leader in technical industries that underpin our most critical sectors, including computing and aerospace. However, much of our advanced STEM talent is caught in bottlenecks in the U.S. immigration system. This is severely threatening the talent pipeline in America.

- Nearly two-thirds of U.S. graduate students studying semiconductor-related programs and artificial intelligence (AI) were born overseas.
- Wait times for green cards are prohibitive. Top STEM graduates from India are projected to wait decades for a green card.
- Of the Ph.D.s who leave the country after graduating, over half cite immigration issues as the reason.

Who Else Is Focused On STEM Skills?

America remains the most desirable destination for top scientists and engineers from around the globe. However, China is focusing on growing its domestic STEM talent pipelines. If China gets the upper hand because America cannot retain advanced STEM talent, it would undermine national security in this country.

- In the past decade, China has doubled its higher education budget.
- Chinese Universities are climbing the global rankings of best schools.
- Annually, China outputs twice as many STEM master's degrees than America, and will soon have double the STEM Ph.Ds.



What is Congress Doing About It?

Both the House and the Senate have passed legislation to bolster American competition and reduce our reliance on China. However, only the House bill includes a provision that will help keep professionals with STEM degrees in the U.S.

- The House version passed with a provision exempting those with advanced STEM degrees from green card caps, providing the tech talent America needs to compete with China.
- Both bills are now in conference, where senators and representatives will reconcile the differences between them and agree on a final piece of legislation that can pass in both chambers.

What Other Immigration Provisions are Included in the Legislation?

The House bill also includes additional immigration provisions that the Senate version lacks:

- One initiative would formalize a visa pathway for entrepreneurs, allowing a three-year grant of status for international entrepreneurs and essential employees working for startups. Over two dozen countries, including China, have start-up visas — the U.S. does not.
- The bill also includes provisions that would grant protections to certain persecuted Hong Kongers and Uyghurs and close an adoption-related loophole in the Child Citizenship Act.

Who Supports Immigration Provisions like the Green Card Cap Removal?

Senior national security leaders who have served in Republican and Democratic administrations urge the conferees to include key provisions to better recruit and retain international STEM talent in the final bill.

- National security leaders believe that American leadership in technology, a cornerstone of competitiveness, rests in large part on our ability to leverage domestic and international talent.
- Remaining competitive is especially critical in the face of unprecedented competition from China.

This fact sheet drew from a letter sent recently to congressional leaders urging the inclusion of STEM immigration provisions in the final bill. The Council on National Security and Immigration is proud to be a part of this effort. Members of the Council who signed are Doug Baker, Randy Beardsworth, Barbara Comstock, Elaine Dezenski, Don Kent, Robert Moczny, Julie Myers Wood, Michael Neifach, Paul Rosenzweig, Stewart Verdery, Joe Whitley and Jim Williams.

Read the full letter [here](#).