

## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS;**

### **Congress Cancels a Vote to Increase Visas**

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### **Body**

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One week after announcing a compromise to **increase** the number of **visas** available for high-technology workers, Congressional leaders **canceled** planned **votes** today on the legislation under the threat of a veto.

Although supporters of the legislation remained optimistic about the chances of a compromise with the White House, the **canceled vote** dashed hopes of relieving critical worker shortages before the fiscal year ends in September.

The White House threatened a veto on Thursday night, expressing concerns that provisions to insure that American workers would not be replaced with cheaper foreign labor were inadequate.

The 65,000 **visas** available this year for skilled foreign workers were used up in May. Technology companies have been lobbying heavily for an immediate **increase** this year, saying crucial projects, including the repair of Year 2000 computer problems, have been delayed by the shortage of workers with the necessary advanced computer programming and engineering skills.

Among concessions the Administration is seeking is a fee on employers who sponsor foreign workers. The money would go into a fund to train American workers. The White House also wants stronger language to insure that Americans are not being laid off and then replaced with cheaper foreign labor and an arbitration process for American workers who think they have been wrongly let go.

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