

MODEST H-1B PLAN WON'T HELP

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Body

YOUR editorial headlined "**H-1B visa** cap needs to rise, but cautiously for now" (Opinion, March 20) proposes an inadequate solution for expanding the **H-1B visa** program to **help** recruit the highly educated workers now in high demand, in short supply and so necessary for the continued vibrant growth of the high-tech industry.

While legislation in Congress to increase the **H-1B visa** cap to 160,000, as proposed by Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Tex., represents a step in the right direction, it would be too tiny a step and would not meet the demand that currently exists.

Of the 115,000 visas issued this year, somewhere between 35,000 and 40,000 visas were approved last year and rolled over into this year's allocation. There could be upward of 80,000 visas approved this year and rolled over into the next year. If the cap is set at 160,000, half will be used before the year begins.

The **H-1B** levels set in the Dreier/Lofgren bill (195,000) and the Senate's Hatch/Abraham/Feinstein proposal (200,000) -- bills which you did not endorse -- are far more realistic targets for the **H-1B visa** cap, given the the employment growth occurring in the high-tech industry.

High-tech companies need access to the best and brightest individuals who have been and will continue to be the lifeblood of the industry. The Dreier/Lofgren and Hatch/Abraham/Feinstein bills will ensure that the high-tech industry will have access to those workers who have **helped** make the industry the nation's prime economic engine and the world's model for innovation.

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Notes

OPINION

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