

## **Immigration Bill Invests in America's Future**

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### **Body**

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To the Editor:

"Give Me, Also, Your Skilled" (editorial, Aug. 27), arguing for immigration reform, graciously mentions my family unity and employment opportunity bill, H.R. 4300, pending before the House of Representatives. You are wide of the mark in criticizing as "punitive" the proposed assessment of a fee on medium- and large-size businesses that import workers to pay for education and training for United States citizens.

And it is hard to take seriously the charge that a bill that increases family- and employment-based immigration could smack of the old-time fear of foreigners. The most sweeping immigration reform in 25 years shows no fear of foreigners. It is hardly punitive to make it easier for employers to hire immigrants.

Common sense shows the connection between American industry's unfilled needs for highly skilled workers and the failure of our schools to provide them. In charging larger companies a modest fee for immigrant workers, all my bill proposes to do is make a contribution to solving our long-term educational problem while answering our immediate need.

The fees are not large - \$500 for a medium-size company, \$1,000 for a large company, and small businesses and nonprofits would be able to hire immigrants free. Large companies that import workers for highly skilled jobs that cannot be filled from our domestic labor pool pay much more just for the paperwork. The employment-based immigration system I propose will be far simpler. Employers will save money bringing in workers -and they'll make money when the workers are here.

My bill proposes to use most of the fees to help states establish education and training programs. For example, Connecticut workers need to begin shifting from defense industries to high-tech, export-oriented industry. The rest of the fees will go for math and science scholarships for students in need.

American unemployment is relatively low, except where it is shockingly high. How can that be? The answer is that we have a swiss-cheese economy. Let's use expanded immigration to help fill in the holes. Let's not forget those Americans who are not ready, but who could be prepared in the future, if education and training are improved.

The classic liberal formation that everybody should pay for education and training is flawed. It is the same lesson taught by our budget mess: When everybody is supposed to pay, nobody seems to get the bill.

Fees to establish an American workers educational trust fund will not raise enough to pay for the massive investment we must make in better education and training. However, it will be a step in the right direction.

(Rep.) BRUCE A. MORRISON

Chairman, Subcommittee on

**Immigration**, Refugees  
and International Law  
Washington, Sept. 4, 1990

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