



March 14, 2013

Senator Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

Senator Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Harkin and Senator Alexander,

As you know, there is currently a STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and computer science) education crisis in America. For example, approximately 120,000 computer-related STEM jobs are created each year, while our higher education system only awards around 40,000 bachelor's degrees annually in this field. Moreover, STEM occupations are projected to grow by 17% from 2009 to 2018 compared to 9.8% growth for non-STEM occupations. Unfortunately, at the current pace, the U.S. will not produce even half the number of graduates needed to fill those positions.

As a result of such deficiencies, American employers have found themselves increasingly unable to fill open positions with qualified workers, even as millions of Americans across the country remain jobless. Sadly, these same companies will—and in many cases, already are—finding it increasingly difficult to compete globally in the very same industries they once led.

Few would deny that America's shortage of high-skilled workers is a problem that requires our attention, both in the short and long terms. Thankfully, just last month, Senators Hatch, Klobuchar, Rubio and Coons took an important first step in addressing that problem when they introduced S. 169, the Immigration Innovation Act, also known as "I-Squared." The bill, establishes a funding mechanism in which companies that employ workers with H-1B visas and green cards pay into a STEM fund meant to drive STEM education improvements throughout the country, from kindergarten through college.

The coalition inSPIRE STEM USA (Supporting Productive Immigration Reform and Education), which we all support, is comprised of a broad base of education advocates, businesses and other national organizations who understand the need for government action to ensure that America's next generation is qualified to fill the types of high-skilled jobs the 21st century requires.

We hope you too will see the immense value the STEM fund in I-Squared could provide to schools across the country, and that you will join us in our support of S. 169, which will support a legislative solution that will strengthen both the long-term and short-term prospects of the United States STEM workforce.

Thank you for your time, and please don't hesitate to contact any of us if you would like to further discuss this important issue.

Sincerely,



Beneva Schulte,
Executive Director,
inSPIRE STEM USA





***in*SPIRE** **STEM USA**

- Afterschool Alliance
- American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- American Stem Alliance
- Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund
- Campaign for Environmental Literacy
- College Board
- Computing in the Core
- Caterpillar
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Dell
- Education Development Center
- Excelencia in Education
- Expedia, Inc.
- General Electric
- H.R. Policy
- Hands on Science Partnership
- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
- Hispanic Heritage Foundation
- IBM
- Intel
- Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
- KISS Institute for Practical Robotics
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- Microsoft
- National Association of Manufacturers
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- National Hispanic Council on Aging
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Puerto Rican Coalition
- National Science Teachers Association
- New England Council
- Sabre Holdings
- STEM Connector
- TechAmerica
- The Hispanic Institute
- The JASON Project
- U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce