

# Employment-based Green Cards: Vital to American Innovation and Economic Growth

## – THE PROBLEM –

### *The Outdated EB Green Card System Prevents U.S. Employers from Retaining Top Talent*

- ▶ Today, backlogs in the employment-based (EB) green card system leave some highly educated professionals waiting up to six years or more. Congress set these quotas in 1990.
- ▶ A study by the Kauffman Foundation estimated that more than one million highly educated people are currently waiting for green cards, yet only 140,000 EB green cards are available annually.
- ▶ While EB green card applicants wait, they are limited in seeking promotions or being transferred to another city, and they risk longer delays if they change jobs. They are in professional limbo, and their spouses may be prevented from working and contributing to America.
- ▶ Spouses and children count against the EB green card quota, effectively cutting it by more than 50 percent.

## – THE OPPORTUNITY COSTS –

### *America Risks Losing Highly Educated Professionals Who Make Great Contributions*

- ▶ U.S. employers hire highly educated, foreign-born engineers, scientists, researchers, medical professionals and teachers – working professionals who keep America on the cutting edge of knowledge and innovation.
- ▶ While temporary H-1B visas are typically used to hire these professionals, EB green cards allow U.S. employers to keep these much-needed and highly sought-after professionals living, working and innovating in America.
- ▶ In the last 15 years, immigrants have started 25 percent of U.S. venture-backed public companies, and in 2005, those companies generated more than \$130 billion in revenue.
- ▶ Major U.S. employers such as Intel, Sun Microsystems, eBay, Yahoo! and Google were all founded, at least in part, by foreign nationals.

## – THE INTERIM SOLUTION –

### *Enact Bipartisan, Common-Sense EB Green Card Reforms This Year*

- ▶ EB green cards that were authorized in previous years, but unused due to processing delays, should be “recaptured” and made available to U.S. employers this year. (H.R. 5882)
- ▶ Per country limits should be eliminated, thus removing artificial bottlenecks for employees from high-demand countries. (H.R. 5921)
- ▶ Highly educated, foreign-born students earning an advanced degree in science, technology, engineering or mathematics in U.S. universities should be fast-tracked towards permanent residency and not count toward the annual limit on EB green cards. (H.R. 6039 / S. 3084)

***Congress Must Make the EB Green Card System Work for America  
Enact Reforms This Year***