

SENATOR ASKS REDMOND TO PUT US WORKERS AHEAD OF FOREIGNERS



Senator Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican, has asked Microsoft about its plans to slash up to 5,000 jobs, urging the world's biggest software company to preserve the jobs of Americans ahead of foreigners working on visas. "I am concerned that Microsoft will be retaining foreign guest workers rather than similarly qualified American employees when it implements its layoff plan," Grassley said yesterday. Microsoft shocked investors when it **announced** up to 1,400 layoffs yesterday, with 3,600 to come. The company has been a champion of expanding the H-1B visa program, a temporary visa program that lets American companies and universities hire foreign workers in a category considered by the government to be a "specialty occupation." Grassley is asking Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer to provide a breakdown of the jobs to be eliminated, and how many of those are individuals with H-1B visas and how many are Americans. "Microsoft has a moral obligation to protect these American workers by putting them first during these difficult economic times," Grassley said.

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