

## CALIFORNIA STARTUP SEES ENTREPRENEUR-SHIP AS VISA SOLUTION



We have all heard of start-up tech companies beginning in someone's garage in Silicon Valley, but what about on board a ship? That is exactly the idea being considered by a California startup company that wants to operate a vessel off the coast that would house foreign entrepreneurs who cannot get work visas to work in the United States, but still have dreams of creating the next big techie thing. However, the Blueseed Company based in Sunnyvale states the current immigration rules can sink such promising ventures, contributing to the decline in new jobs. The ship would provide a solution by giving foreign entrepreneurs a place to develop their companies only a short boat ride from the hub of the production. According to Max Marty, the co-founder and CEO of Blueseed, many people would like to go to Silicon Valley, but there is no feasible way for them to do so. Marty is the son of Cuban immigrants. He states he thought of the idea of a ship after listening to some of his fellow international students at the University of Miami business school complaining about having to leave the U.S. after graduation. Although many politicians have considered the issue, efforts to change the system have proven futile. During a Twitter Town Hall last July, President Barack Obama said he wanted to make sure the talented U.S. students had the possibility of remaining in the U.S. and able to stay and create new jobs. "We don't want to pay for training them here and then having them benefit other countries," Obama said. Senators Mark Udall, a Democrat from Colorado, John Kerry, a Democrat from Massachusetts, and Richard Lugar, a Republican from Indiana reintroduced a bill this year to address this issue called the Startup Visa Act. This bill would allow both immigrant entrepreneurs and foreign students graduating from universities in the United States to apply for a two-year visa if they can find a qualified U.S. investor to finance their stay and can show how they plan to create new jobs for Americans. However, the founders of Blueseed do not foresee any real reform as it is an election year with a particularly divided Congress. Blueseed's president, Dario Mutabdzifa, feels his company's solution is entrepreneurial in scope. He cites several examples of people living as well as working on ships, from cruise ships to the military. The ship he proposes would be able to house about a thousand people. It would be docked in international waters about 12 miles off the coast of San Francisco Bay. He states the ship would be legally registered in perhaps the Bahamas or the Marshall Islands and those living on the boat would be responsible to abide by the laws of that land. The ship's residents would use temporary business or tourist visas to go ashore to conduct any necessary business, as these visas are more easily obtained.

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