

COMPANIES SEEK H-1B VISA WORKERS NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE GENIUSES BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE WILLING TO WORK FOR LESS



The H-1B visa program is more than two decades old and was commenced to allow American companies to hire skilled technical workers from abroad. However, the visa has become a contentious issue with a proportion of the people saying that it eats into American jobs and limits wages. Others allege that it encourages immigration and most of the skilled workers who enter the country on this visa, go on to stay here and eventually become American citizens. Since it is a non-immigrant visa it does not give its holder the right to stay in the country beyond its permitted period. Nor does it automatically make a person a citizen or commence his own business once he is here. Big companies and people as important as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, have repeatedly told the government, the country lacks home grown skilled labor and its dependence on outside labor is an absolute imperative. Moreover, big tech employers have been aggressively lobbying Capitol Hill to increase the H-1B quota. But those opposed to the visa allege that the big companies and their CEO's are wrong. What they are saying is shortsighted and whilst it may be good for their companies, it is not good for the country in the long term. They say that it will lead to lower wages, lower employment and a lower standard of living and yes, it eats jobs that were meant for US citizens. They said that it would be pertinent for the people to understand that at any given moment there are upwards of 700,000 H-1B Visa workers working in the US. Add another 1, 90,000 to that number every year. Also remember that each visa holder is entitled to stay in the country for 3 years and can have the visa extended for an additional 3, which makes each visa worth 6 years. By this time he or she has developed enough contacts to convince authorities that they are worth keeping in the US forever and they never leave the shores. Some get married to US citizens during this period and that is a virtually certainty that they will get their H-1B Visa converted into a green card. Moreover, when people like Bill Gates talk about getting geniuses to work, they are wrong. There is another visa that is there specifically to get geniuses to work in the country. It is called the O Visa - O for outstanding. The H-1B Visa brings in routine IT coders, of whom there are a considerable number in the country. The anti lobby says that the O visa has no quotas, as there are not too many applicants, which logically means that there are not too many geniuses around abroad. The H-1B Visa on the other hand gets its quota filled within weeks of being announced. So if a guy is really high-quality talent, like the type Microsoft, Google and Apple never tire of saying why can't they be brought under the O visa, the argue. Opponents say the truth is that there is no shortage of Home grown technical talent in the US. But there is a shortage of technical talent that is unwilling to work at the wages that H-1B Visa holders gladly accept. Sub-standard wages are acceptable to them, to the American workers they are not – so it is not the talent that makes American companies pant for H-1B Visa workers, it is the saving on the salary. The whole charade is just about money. USA workers need to be paid more that is a fact but as more and more jobs go to outsiders our economy becomes more and more dependent on them. By bringing in workers who are willing to work for less and at terms that would be illegal for the American worker they are making it an uneven playing field for the American worker – the consequence for the US worker are short term, but the long term consequences for the US are very grave indeed.