

GROWING THE ENGINEERING WORKFORCE

America's engineering industry serves clients representing a broad range of markets and needs more engineering graduates to support and sustain a growing economy. According to the National Science Foundation, nearly 30 percent of all engineering and science degree holders are over 50 and expected to retire in the next 15 years. ACEC supports a workforce agenda to make it easier for firms to assist recent graduates with student loan debt, and federal immigration policies that enable firms to attract and keep the best and brightest talent from around the world.

Key Points:

- Student loans are a significant financial concern for engineering graduates making decisions about how to use their skills and expertise.
- Representatives Scott Peters (D-CA) and Rodney Davis (R-IL), and Senators Mark Warner (D-VA) and John Thune (R-SD), have introduced the Employer Participation in Repayment Act, which would allow employers to provide up to \$5,250 annually for student loan debt without it being a taxable benefit for employees.
- H-1B high-skilled visas are another important tool for expanding the pool of engineers.
- The National Science Foundation reports that in 2015 half of engineering master's degrees awarded by U.S. universities were earned by foreign nationals on temporary visas, including 70 percent of master's degrees in electrical engineering.
- Demand for H-1B visas outweighs the supply: in FY2018, the cap of 65,000 for those with a bachelor's degree plus an additional 20,000 for those with a master's degree or higher was reached after the application window had been open for just seven days.

Action Items:

- Cosponsor the Employer Participation in Repayment Act (HR 1043/S 460).
- Increase the number of H-1B visas.



H.R. 1043, the “Employer Participation in Repayment Act” House Cosponsors*

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S. 460, the “Employer Participation in Repayment Act” Senate Cosponsors*

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*Cosponsors as of 4-15-19