PRESIDENTS' ALLIANCE | ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION

HIGHER ED IMMIGRATION PORTAL

Keep STEM Talent Act

On April 1, 2025, Senators Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and Angus King (I-Maine) introduced the bipartisan Keep STEM Talent Act of 2025 (S. 1233). On April 3, Representatives Bill Foster (D-IL-11), Mike Lawler (R-NY-17), Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA-06), and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) introduced a companion bill in the House (H.R. 2627). If enacted, the legislation would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to create a direct pathway to lawful permanent residence for certain advanced STEM graduates from U.S. institutions by exempting them from the annual employment-based green card numerical limits.

The Keep STEM Talent Act would:

- Create a direct pathway to lawful permanent residence for eligible international students who earn a master's degree or higher in a STEM field from a U.S. institution.
- Exempt eligible applicants from the annual employment-based green card numerical limits, reducing lengthy wait times.
- Help the United States attract and retain highly skilled STEM talent that drives research, innovation, and economic growth.

The bill would make international students eligible for lawful permanent residence if they:

- Have earned a Master's degree or higher in a STEM field at a U.S institution and:
    - Are employed or have an offer of employment in an area directly related to their area of study;
    - Are paid a salary above the median for their respective occupational field; and
    - Have an approved labor certification.

The Keep STEM Talent Act would strengthen America's competitiveness by:

- Helping to grow our economy through job creation and innovation.
    - International students contributed nearly $43 billion to the U.S. economy and created almost 360,000 jobs during the 2024-2025 academic year.
    - One U.S. job is created for every three international students enrolled in a U.S. institution.
- Creating opportunities for American students and strengthening academic programs.
    - For each additional international undergraduate student enrolled at a public university, two more in-state students enroll as well.
    - International students are key for sustaining enrollment in STEM disciplines, creating academic opportunities for American students.
- Ensuring that the United States remains a global leader in research, technology and innovation by retaining highly skilled STEM professionals educated at U.S. colleges and universities.

Learn more on the Higher Ed Immigration Portal.