

THE
NEW ENGLAND
COUNCIL

June 11, 2013

The Honorable Christopher Murphy

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte

The Honorable Susan Collins

The Honorable Jack Reed

The Honorable Angus King

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

The Honorable William Cowan

The Honorable Bernard Sanders

Dear Senators,

The New England Council, along with the undersigned state and regional Chambers of Commerce and business associations, together represent thousands of employers across a range of industries throughout the New England states. As you know, our region is home to a growing innovation economy, and many of our members employ individuals with advanced training in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields. However, in order to continue to grow and compete globally, these employers must have access to a pipeline of highly skilled STEM workers. Unfortunately, our colleges and universities currently are not graduating enough students with the necessary training to fulfill the current demand.

We believe that the efforts underway in Congress to reform our nation's immigration system present an opportunity to address this shortage of highly-skilled STEM workers. We write today to convey our support for an amendment from Senators Hatch, Klobuchar and Coons to The Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, which would significantly increase STEM education funds for our states.

We encourage you to support the amendment from Senators Hatch, Klobuchar and Coons, which we believe will strengthen education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), along with computer science fields. Specifically, this amendment would establish a STEM education fund supported by new fees for employers seeking to hire high-skilled foreign workers. The fund was originally proposed in the bipartisan Immigration and Innovation Act of 2013 (I-Squared), which a number of New England Senators co-sponsored. As outlined in the new Hatch, Klobuchar and Coons amendment to the comprehensive immigration reform bill, the fund would allow states to strengthen their STEM education programs and expand opportunities for more students to pursue careers in STEM fields.

By investing in STEM education, we will ensure that we have the high-skilled workforce to meet the demands of our region's employers in the future. With an estimated one million additional STEM related jobs in the United States by 2018, failure to address our high skilled labor gap could have a devastating impact on our nation's and our region's economic wellbeing. We have enclosed a [fact sheet](#) that further details the demand for STEM workers here in New England.

The New England Council and the below signed organizations thank you for your work on a bipartisan solution to our longer-term STEM education challenges. We hope that you will support the amendment from Senators Hatch, Klobuchar and Coons that establishes a national STEM fund as part of comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

Sincerely,

The undersigned Chambers of Commerce and Regional Business Organizations:



