

ALERTS

Immigration & Federal Relations Alert - Immigration Bill Proposes Substantial Reforms In Access To High-Skilled Foreign Workers In The U.S.

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On Jan. 29, 2013, the Immigration Innovation Act of 2013 was introduced by a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators. The bill focuses on areas needed to ensure that businesses in the U.S. may remain competitive in the global market by increasing the employment-based nonimmigrant visas (H-1B visas) and making available permanent resident status to high-skilled foreign workers.

The bill aims to accomplish this goal by removing the 20,000 H-1B visas cap on hires by U.S. companies of foreign employees with U.S. advanced degrees; increasing the H-1B visas cap from 65,000 to 115,000; implementing a market based system to increase and decrease the allocation of H-1B visas; eliminating impediments for high-skilled foreign workers changing jobs; exempting individuals earning a STEM advanced degree from the employment based green card cap; and by other provisions outlined in the bill.

This bill, sponsored by Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Chris Coons (D-DE), was introduced immediately after President Barack Obama's speech on the need for immigration reform and a day after eight Senators announced a bipartisan outline for immigration reform.

The Immigration Innovation Act of 2013 is the first immigration bill to be introduced in the 113th Congress and contains specific language addressing high-skilled immigration reform. However, it is likely to undergo changes as members of Congress and their constituents weigh-in on this important issue.

For more information, contact the Barnes & Thornburg attorneys with whom you work, or the following members of the firm's Immigration and Federal Relations groups: Mariana Richmond at mariana.richmond@btlaw.com or (317)-231-7476, and Liz Lopez at liz.lopez@btlaw.com or (202) 371-6376.

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