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Bill would reserve visas for math, science doctorates

By Cristina Marcos

Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Mass.) has introduced a bill that would create a new employment-based visa for people who have completed math and science doctorate degrees in the United States.

The measure, called The Best Return on America's Investment Now (BRAIN) Act, would reserve 14,000 visas for people already legally in the U.S. who have earned doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering and math fields from U.S. universities.

The reserved visas would represent a portion of the maximum 40,040 visas allocated annually. The program would not create any new visas.

Capuano said the legislation, introduced last week, would help U.S. businesses compete.

“Our higher education system attracts the best and brightest students from around the world. We provide an education, then send graduates home to compete against us. It just doesn’t make sense,” Capuano said.

He also noted that not enough U.S. citizens go into the math and science fields.

“Although we would love it, not enough Americans seek enough of these degrees to satisfy our national needs. We should want to keep these graduates here to help expand our economy,” Capuano said.

Capuano's bill would also eliminate the current limit of 2,802 employment-based visas per country.

The Massachusetts Democrat said that limiting the number of available visas per country is unfair to larger countries like India or China, arguing that the U.S. “should want the best and brightest regardless of their country of origin.”

House Democrats filed a discharge petition on an immigration reform bill earlier this year to pressure Republicans to vote on the issue, but their efforts have so far not materialized.

Read more: <http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/203498-bill-would-reserve-visas-for-math-science-doctorates>