3 January 2013

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

On behalf of the 210,000 IEEE members in the United States, I want to thank you for supporting H.R. 6429, The STEM Jobs Act of 2012. We appreciate your public endorsement of the bill during the attempt to bring it up for a vote on the Senate floor. While your attempt failed, we are optimistic that the bill will be brought up again later this year.

As you know, The STEM Jobs Act would have transferred 55,000 visas from the Diversity lottery system to the EB visa program. These new visas would have been available to international students who earn a Masters or Ph.D. in a STEM field from a qualified American university. By doing so, the bill would have made it much easier for graduates from our top universities to become Americans after completing their education. And would have done so without increasing immigration overall.

The STEM Jobs Act would have also helped over 300,000 families currently in the nuclear family backlog remain intact while they wait for one spouse’s visa. Had it passed, this would have been the most dramatic improvement to the family-visa system passed by Congress in twenty years.

Providing skilled immigrants with a green card would have allowed them to fully contribute to the U.S. economy shortly after graduating, including starting their own businesses. American workers benefit directly when skilled students are allowed to work and innovate within our economy. And all workers are protected by the market-based freedom that comes from having a green card.

We hope that the bipartisan support we saw in both Chambers of Congress on this issue continues in 2013. Support for STEM visas runs very deep in Congress and across the American public. We hope to turn this support into real immigration reform soon.

IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of the more than 210,000 engineering, computing and technology professionals who are U.S. members of IEEE. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Russell Harrison in our Washington office at (202) 530-8326 or email at r.t.harrison@ieee.org.

Sincerely,

Marc T. Apter
IEEE-USA President