Dear Senators:

On behalf of the 206,000 members of IEEE-USA, we state our support for the high-skill portions of S.744. IEEE-USA represents the largest group of technology workers in the United States. As an organization, we have no position on the bill's low-skill immigration provisions. However, we believe that specific provisions for high tech workers in S. 744 would be an improvement over our current high-skill immigration system, and therefore express our support for it.

To be clear, this is not the bill that we would have written and it could certainly be improved. But we recognize that Senators carefully balanced many competing interests in order to come up with this compromise – and it is a compromise that we can live with. Defeat of this bill is likely to erode any chance of obtaining what we believe are positive provisions for high tech workers.

Recognizing the damage that outsourcing does to the US economy, we do not see a justification for any H-1B increase. An increase in H-1Bs beyond what is provided in S. 744 is unacceptable to us. We strongly support the worker protections that are in S. 744, and oppose any effort to weaken them. The fees imposed on the H-1B program are helpful, and we applaud their use to attract and retain Americans in STEM fields. But we cannot say that we support any H-1B increases.

Having said that, S.744's provisions to eliminate numerical restrictions and to deregulate the green card process for foreign students in STEM fields are measures that the IEEE-USA has advocated for over many years. While we have serious reservations about the H-1B increases, we are willing to let that go because the green card provisions are so important to our members. Replacing the H-1B model with a green cards model for new hires in the technology sector is by far the best protection for America's highly skilled workers, creating and keeping jobs in the United States.

We urge the Judiciary Committee, as it takes up S.744, to resist efforts that would destroy the balanced compromises of this legislation and make it more difficult to enact into law.

Sincerely,

Marc Apter
President, IEEE-USA