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**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION**  
**AND CITIZENSHIP**

**STATEMENT**  
**VIRTUAL HEARING:**  
**“OH, CANADA! HOW OUTDATED U.S.**  
**IMMIGRATION POLICIES PUSH TOP TALENT TO**  
**OTHER COUNTRIES”**

**TUESDAY, JULY 13, 2021**  
**2:00 P.M. (EDT)**

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- Thank you, Chairwoman Lofgren and Ranking Member McClintock for convening this hearing on *“How Outdated U.S. Immigration Policies Push Top Talent to Other Countries.”*
- Let me welcome our witnesses:

Majority Witnesses:  
**Stuart Anderson**

Executive Director  
National Foundation for American Policy.

**Jennifer G. Young**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Technology Councils of North America (TECNA).

**Sudip Parikh, Ph.D.**  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

*Minority Witness:*  
*Ronil Hira, Ph.D., P.E.*  
*Associate Professor*  
*Howard University*

- The purpose of this hearing is to explore whether our antiquated immigration system is hampering the ability of the United States to remain competitive in the global race for talent, particularly in relation to Canada.
- To remain competitive in a global economy, the United States cannot rely solely on domestic talent but our outdated immigration laws make it exceptionally difficult for top talent to come to the United States and as a result, many immigrants who would otherwise pursue the American dream are now turning to other countries, most notably, Canada.
- Embracing a strategy grounded in the belief that immigration is an economic driver, Canada has recently made significant strides in building flexibility and recruitment incentives into their immigration system to attract skilled individuals, including those whom our system cannot accommodate.
- In recent years, Canada has increased its capacity to provide permanent residence to skilled workers through programs such as Express Entry, the Start-Up Visa Program, and the Federal Skilled Workers Program to facilitate the ability of Canadian companies to hire foreign talent.
- The results are paying off for Canada, earning Toronto the moniker: “Silicon Valley of the North.”

- Meanwhile, demand for high-skilled workers in the United States is growing significantly and far exceeds the supply.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs in “computer and information technology occupations [are] projected to grow 11 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations.”
- Further, computer occupations “weathered the [coronavirus] pandemic well” when compared to other occupations.
- In October 2020, the unemployment rate in computer and mathematical occupations stood at 2.8 percent, as compared to 3 percent in January 2020, well before the pandemic hit the United States.
- By comparison, the unemployment rate for non-computer occupations was 6.7 percent in October 2020.
- These and other numbers suggest that “despite the economic upheaval of the pandemic, there remains a shortage of highly skilled workers who can meet the persistent demand of employers.
- This shortage could have a dampening effect on the country’s long-term economic recovery if businesses cannot find enough workers to fill technical and specialized roles that are critical to their continued growth and innovation.”

### **HIGH-SKILLED IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES**

- The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which sets forth the basic structure of our current immigration laws, was established in 1952, when Congress passed the McCarran Walter Act.
- In 1965, the INA was updated to replace national origin quotas on immigrant visas with hemispheric quotas (per-country caps). Twenty-five years later, the Immigration Act of 1990 substantially changed the immigrant visa preference system and updated the nonimmigrant visa categories to reflect the evolution of the nation’s economic needs since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

- This is the last time significant revisions to the legal immigration framework have been enacted.
- Canada’s immigration landscape is different than the United States; it has one of the largest foreign-born populations in the world, with immigrants making up over 21 percent of its total population in 2019, compared to 15.4 percent of the United States.
- In 2019, Canada granted permanent resident status to approximately 340,000 individuals (its highest number in over 100 years), whereas the United States (whose population is almost nine times larger than Canada’s), granted 577,000 person permanent resident status.
- Like the United States, Canadian immigration laws once overtly discriminated based on national origin and ethnicity. In 1971, however, the country embraced a policy of multiculturalism, which was later codified in a 1976 update to Canada’s Immigration Act.
- Since then, Canada has been buoyed by its ability to rapidly change in response to shifting economic conditions and the needs of the country.
- In 2001, Canada passed the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which went into effect on June 28, 2002, and among other things, “permit[ted] Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration” and “facilitate the entry of visitors, students and temporary workers for purposes such as trade, commerce, tourism, international understanding and cultural, educational and scientific activities.”
- A critical part of Canada’s dynamic immigration system is its Global Skills Strategy, which was launched in 2017 to give Canadian employers a faster and more reliable way of attracting global talent.
- Under Canada’s Global Skills Strategy, there are two main mechanisms by which skilled workers can obtain temporary status to work in Canada: The Temporary Foreign Worker Program which was created to spur economic growth and respond to the needs of the Canadian labor market by allowing Canadian employers to attract talent from outside the country and the International Mobility Program, an immigration

program that permits the expedited hiring of foreign workers for certain specialized roles when domestic workers are not available.

- Madam Chair, a diverse talent base strengthens our competitive STEM advantage and advances our national security interests and immigrants are critical to these efforts as they “boost the nation’s capacity for innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological change.”
- Immigrants and their children founded 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies, including Google, Apple, and Amazon, employing more than 10 million people worldwide.
- To remain competitive, the United States must invest in and promote STEM education and training for American students and workers and supplement those efforts by recruiting and retaining top global talent, particularly those who earn their degrees while studying in the United States.
- Foreign nationals make up about 22 percent of the students who receive STEM degrees from institutions of higher education in the United States.
- Without significant reforms, the United States will continue to lose scientific talent and other innovators—including those who work in professions that did not exist 30 years ago—to other countries with more modernized systems.
- The bipartisan National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence calls immigration reform “a national security imperative.”
- Madam Chair, I look forward to hearing from our panel of witnesses as to what the United States should adopt to stem the ‘brain drain’ and maintain its competitive dominance in the economic marketplace and industries of the future.
- Thank you for convening this important hearing, I yield back my time.