



September 19, 2012

Speaker John Boehner
Majority Leader Eric Cantor
Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
Minority Whip Steny Hoyer

Dear Leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives,

As a leading voice for tech start-up and emerging companies, CONNECT applauds you for your efforts to address a critical innovation policy issue by bringing to a vote the STEM Jobs Act of 2012, H.R. 6429. This important legislation will spark innovation across the U.S. and assist start-up company growth, which remains America's best job-creating engine.

CONNECT was birthed out of the University of California—San Diego over twenty-five years ago with the mission to propel creative ideas and emerging technologies to the marketplace by training entrepreneurs and connecting them to the comprehensive resources they need to sustain viability and business vibrancy. Since 1985, CONNECT has assisted in the formation and development of over 3,000 companies and is recognized as one of the world's most successful regional innovation development programs. In 2010, CONNECT won the Innovation in Economic Development Award in the Regional Innovation Clusters category presented by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration.

Although much of the discussion regarding STEM visa reform centers around the benefits that will accrue to larger companies in the tech sector, it should not be overlooked that a STEM visa reform proposal like H.R. 6429 will facilitate new STEM grads to also be hired by startup and emerging companies. As both the Small Business Administration and the Kauffman Foundation have confirmed, the vast majority of America's net job growth in recent years has come from startup and emerging companies. Allowing foreign-born STEM graduates to stay in the U.S. to work in startup and emerging companies will help keep America at the edge of the frontier of global competitiveness. However, that edge is being aggressively trimmed by our foreign competitors. Thus, it is imperative we retain U.S.-educated, foreign-born STEM talent instead of forcing them to find jobs overseas with global competitors.

There is much talk in Washington about helping start-up businesses, but the STEM Jobs Act takes tangible action toward achieving that goal. We commend you for advancing this solution that will have real-world benefits for America's entrepreneurs and innovators.

In CONNECT's "[Innovation Agenda for the 112th Congress](#)" and "[Seven Innovation Policy Ideas to Spark an American Recovery](#)," we endorsed STEM visa reform. Continuing that long-term commitment in support of the issue, we encourage the House to pass the bill and we stand ready to assist the Senate in its consideration of H.R. 6429.

Sincerely,

Timothy Tardibono

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