



DPE NewsLine

March 2015

Representing over four million highly skilled professional and technical workers in more than 200 occupations, union members work in such fields as health care and education; science, engineering and technology; journalism, entertainment and the arts; public administration and law enforcement. *NewsLine* is a regular publication of the [DPE](#). Back issues of *NewsLine* are available [here](#). Feedback is welcome. Please send it to [Marcie Lawrence](#).

In This Issue:

- **DPE Opposes Bill Expanding H-1B Visa Program**
- **Why IP/Copyright Matters Conference**
- **Reaching Out to Professional Associations: American Library Association Midwinter Meeting**
- **DPE Lends Research Expertise to AFGE Nurse Steering Committee**
- **Professionals in the Workplace Updates**
- **DPE Twitter and Facebook Accounts**
- **DPE Attends The National Summit on Raising Wages, International Labor Communications Association Awards**
- **DPE in the News**
- **DPE Signs On**

DPE OPPOSES BILL EXPANDING H-1B VISA PROGRAM – On January 13, 2015, almost two years to the day, Senators Orrin Hatch (R, UT), Amy Klobuchar (D, MN), Chris Coons (D, DE), and Richard Blumenthal (D, CT) reintroduced the so-called Immigration Innovation (I-Squared) Act (S. 153). It was bad two years ago and now it is worse. This legislation will undermine our nation’s workforce by distorting the high-tech labor market, driving down wages for current high-tech workers, and dramatically impacting American students who are considering pursuing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) areas of study in college.

Many of these same giveaways to the tech industry were part of the “grand bargain” in an effort to garner the vote of Senator Hatch and others during negotiations for the 2014 comprehensive immigration reform bill approved by the Senate (S. 744). Sad to say they are now offered as a stand-alone measure and not part of any comprehensive plan to fix our broken immigration system.

For over a decade DPE has been outspoken about the H-1B program and the need for reforms, not expansion. For example, the H-1B visa puts the foreign worker in a precarious employment relationship, and gives no meaningful worker protections to domestic STEM graduates seeking employment. Appropriate reforms include wage requirements consistent with the STEM labor market; a good faith effort by employers to recruit American workers before hiring an H-1B worker; protections for current workers against being displaced by an H-1B worker; the ability for H-1B workers to self-petition for visas and green cards; an objective measure of labor shortage in STEM occupations; and job portability for H-1B workers so they are not tied to one employer.

Instead of addressing any of the fixes needed for the H-1B program, the I-Squared Act calls for a massive increase in the number of H-1B visas allotted annually with no reforms at all. The bill will increase the initial H-1B cap from 65,000 annually to 195,000. It will also completely lift the cap on the H-1B visas for post-graduate students graduating from U.S. universities and colleges with STEM degrees. There are no reforms to the wage requirements; no requirement to ensure that American workers are not fired and replaced with an H-1B worker; and no requirement for employers to first recruit American workers before hiring an H-1B worker. What we are left with is a bill that completely lifts the cap altogether on the annual allotment of H-1B visas.

President Almeida and a delegation of unions have made numerous visits to Senate offices to tell them that I-Squared is bad policy and it will continue to harm workers.

For more information about these issues, the DPE has eight [Fact Sheets](#) related to guest workers and the STEM workforce.

WHY IP/COPYRIGHT MATTERS CONFERENCE – On February 3, 2015 the DPE hosted a conference on the importance of intellectual property (IP) protections. DPE Assistant to the President Eric Geist served as the conference moderator. The conference brought together labor, press, Congressional staff, rights holders’ organizations, and companies to stress the importance of protecting IP through copyright and patents. The conference included closing comments by J. Walter Cahill, the 2nd International Vice President of the DPE affiliate, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts. Cahill is also a DPE General Vice President.

A panel addressed “Why IP Protection is Critical to the U.S. Economy and Employment.” It included DPE affiliate panelists Owen Herrstadt, Chief of Staff for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; Richard Masur, National Government Affairs Committee Chair, SAG-AFTRA, and Lowell Peterson, Executive Director, Writers Guild of America, East. Jacqueline Kirby, Vice President, U.S. Government Affairs for AstraZeneca, was also a panelist. Herrstadt addressed the problem of other countries allowing businesses to violate copyrights and steal work from U.S. manufacturers. Masur spoke of how the digital age has made theft of entertainment industry works easier but also that the copies can mimic the quality of the original. Peterson spoke about how illegal copies and downloads hurt writers’ ability to get fair and adequate compensation for their work. Kirby gave examples of people who purchased necessary medicines online that received pills that did not contain what was medically necessary for users.

AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer Liz Shuler delivered the opening speech for the conference by stressing the AFL-CIO's support for IP protection. The AFL-CIO has testified on the importance of IP protections before Congress. Motion Picture Association of America President and CEO Chris Dodd gave the key note speech. Representative Linda Sanchez (D, CA) spoke forcefully on the need for Congress to adequately protect IP.

For more information, contact DPE Assistant to the President [Eric Geist](#), (202) 638-0320 ext. 119.



From left: IAM Chief of Staff Owen Herrstadt, SAG-AFTRA National Government Committee Chair Richard Masur, WGAE Executive Director Lowell Peterson, AstraZeneca Vice President, U.S. Government Affairs Jacqueline Kirby. photo: Keith Mellnick

REACHING OUT TO PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION MIDWINTER MEETING

The American Library Association (ALA) held its Midwinter Meeting January 30–February 3, 2015, in Chicago, IL. DPE Research Director Jennifer Dorning participated in the meeting as both co-chair of the AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee and as chair of the ALA-Allied Professional Association Salaries and Status of Library Workers Unions Subcommittee.

The AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee discussed the upcoming 2015 ALA Annual Conference to be held in San Francisco, June 25–30.

The 2015 Joint Committee program, “Advocating for a Library Future” will feature Axel E. Borg and Miki Goral with [University Council – American Federation of Teachers](#) (representing Librarians and Lecturers in the University of California System) and Bob Muscat and Andrea Prebys-Williams with the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 21. Axel and Miki will discuss how their union fought for funding and staffing in their library system. Bob and Andrea will make a presentation about the [21 Unsung Heroes](#) project.

The AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee has also organized a [bus tour](#) in San Francisco for ALA members that combines the labor and African American History of San Francisco. The tour will follow the [African American Freedom Trail](#) and be led by John William Templeton, curator of the African American Freedom Trail and a friend of labor. The tour is scheduled for June 26, 2015 at 9:30am.

The AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee approved its new name (previous name was the AFL-CIO/ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups). The new name is more concise and will help us in our communications with ALA members. The Labor Committee was also thrilled that our committee member, Lisa Lum Jorgensen, a Librarian at the Wane Public Library and member of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union Local 108, designed our new committee logo.



The AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee is comprised of six labor-side appointees and five ALA appointees who have an interest in labor. The Labor Committee is co-chaired by Jennifer Dorning and Aliqae Geraci, ILR Research Librarian and Assessment Coordinator at Cornell University Library.

Librarians and library workers are represented by several DPE affiliates, including AFGE, AFT, IFPTE, OPEIU, RWDSU, and USW. For questions about the ALA Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting, please contact Jennifer Dorning, 202-638-0320 extension 114, jdorning@dpeaflcio.org.

DPE LENDS RESEARCH EXPERTISE TO AFGE NURSE STEERING COMMITTEE – On

January 29th DPE Research Director Jennifer Dorning made a presentation and facilitated a discussion about research and nurses at AFGE’s Nurse Steering Committee meeting in Las Vegas, NV. The full day meeting covered union and demographic data for federal nurses and how federal nurses could use research tools to build their membership, promote their public health role, advocate for safe staffing, and promote [Federal Nurses Week](#).



For questions about AFGE’s Nurse Steering Committee meeting, please contact Jennifer Dorning, 202-638-0320 extension 114, jdorning@dpeaflcio.org.

PROFESSIONALS IN THE WORKPLACE UPDATES – DPE has updated nine of its Professionals in the Workplace pages. These pages provide occupational overviews for selected professions as well as selected demographic profiles. Information available in the pages includes

employment, earnings, working conditions, union density, and the union difference. Professionals in the Workplace pages are now available in PDF for easy printing and distribution.

- [Women in the Professional Workforce](#)
- [Community and Social Service Professionals](#)
- [Teachers: Preschool through Postsecondary](#)
- [Librarians and Library Paraprofessionals](#)
- [Health Care Professionals and Technicians](#)
- [Professional Performers](#)
- [Life, Physical, and Social Scientists](#)
- [Engineers](#)
- [Science, Engineering, Surveying and Mapping Technicians, and Drafters](#)

For questions about Professionals in the Workplace, please contact Jennifer Dorning, 202-638-0320 extension 114, jdorning@dpeaflcio.org.

DPE TWITTER AND FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS – Follow DPE’s Twitter feed [@dpeaflcio](#) (use the hashtag #dpeaflcio) and ✓ [Like](#) our Facebook page.

DPE ATTENDS THE NATIONAL SUMMIT ON RAISING WAGES, INTERNATIONAL LABOR COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION AWARDS – DPE Assistant to the President Eric Geist attended the AFL-CIO National Summit on Raising Wages. The goals for the summit included making clear to all policymakers and political candidates that gaining labor’s backing will require firm support for a working people’s agenda; develop strategies that will help workers raise their wages and strengthen their collective voice on the job; and identify states and localities to win legislation that raises wages.

DPE Assistant to the President Eric Geist attended the 2014 International Labor Communications Association awards ceremony.

DPE IN THE NEWS – For a December 15, 2014 Boston Globe article, [Spouses hold out hope for new work visa rules](#), President Paul Almeida was interviewed. “It doesn’t force the tech industry to pay more or give an opportunity to recent graduates,” said Paul Almeida, President of the Department for Professional Employees at the AFL-CIO, the nation’s largest labor organization. “It’s just, ‘Here’s a ticket, you have work authorization and you can work anywhere.’”

In a blog post, [Intellectual Property is Vital to the Future of American Workers](#), Motion Picture Association of America President and Chair Chris Dodd wrote about the “Why Copyright/IP Matters” conference.

DPE SIGNS ON – On February 23, 2015, DPE signed onto a [letter](#) from the [Food Research and Action Center](#) to the Chairs and Ranking members of the Senate and House Agricultural Committees to urge the committees to reject more cuts to programs within their jurisdiction. Signers include 392 organizations representing America’s agriculture, nutrition, conservation, rural development, finance, forestry, energy, trade, labor, equipment manufactures, and crop insurance sectors. Other signers include the AFT and the IFPTE.