

Wall Street Journal Interview and AP Article on NFAP H-1B Fee and Scholarship Study:

<http://online.wsj.com/video/opinion-journal-the-other-immigrants/2DA1C016-C62B-4CE1-88FE-8F4502C9B9C8.html>

High-tech visas help fund scholarships, anti-fraud

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WASHINGTON (AP) — A group that backs a visa program designed to bring high-skilled foreign workers to the U.S. reports that some of the approximately \$3 billion in visa fees paid by employers has gone to science and math scholarships, U.S. worker training and anti-fraud activities.

A report issued this week by the **National Foundation for American Policy** points to the use of fees for such programs as a reason to maintain the visa program. The foundation supports policies allowing businesses to hire foreign workers.

The money has paid for 58,000 student scholarships distributed by the National Science Foundation and for 100,000 U.S. workers to get training through the Labor Department, says the report. Some opponents claim the visas cost Americans jobs.

H-1B visas allow foreigners to work in the United States. The visas are temporary, are good for up to six years and can lead to a green card if an employer sponsors the worker. Businesses maintain they are important for bringing needed skills that cannot be found in the U.S. and are necessary because waits for green cards, which provide legal residency, are too long.

"In addition to being required to pay professionals on H-1B visas the same wage as a comparable U.S. worker, the H1-B fees, the legal costs, the staff time and the uncertainty of the immigration process demonstrate the employers really need these individuals and they're complementing the U.S. workforce rather than taking jobs from U.S. workers," said Stuart Anderson, the foundation's executive director.

The organization's report was issued the same week a House subcommittee plans a hearing on the H1-B visas. It is one in a series that the subcommittee has had about immigration as Republicans in the House majority try to build support for tougher immigration enforcement amid the slumping U.S. economy and continued high unemployment rates.

Other hearings have covered the need for a system that can check whether a person is working legally in the U.S.; the Obama administration's preference for auditing employers who hire illegal immigrants rather than conducting more expensive raids; and whether immigrants are taking jobs from American minorities.

According to Anderson's report, businesses that use visas have paid \$2.3 billion in scholarship/work training fees and more than \$700 million in anti-fraud fees. They also pay visa adjudication fees, and can pay fees to get visas processed more efficiently, legal fees and costs associated with paperwork for the dependent family of the worker.

H-1Bs have been criticized as allowing employers to replace American workers with cheaper employees. Thursday's hearing was expected to include discussion of fraud problems in the H-1B program.

The issue is not divided along partisan lines. Sen. Dick Durbin, the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, has teamed up with Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, on legislation seeking to tighten restrictions on H-1Bs.

The districts of House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith, R-Texas, and Rep. Elton Gallegly, R-Calif., are home to high-tech companies, an industry that has lobbied heavily for limiting restrictions on H-1B visas and increasing the numbers available.