

Wall Street Journal

Letters

The American Way of Education, Immigration and Innovation

November 29, 2021

Dear Editor:

While low U.S. standards in teaching math, at least compared with China's, are a problem, America's competitive advantage is in attracting international students and turning them into immigrants.

More than 70% of full-time graduate students in electrical engineering and computer and information sciences at U.S. universities are international students. The 85,000-annual limit on H-1B visas and the low number of employment-based green cards (and a per-country limit) harm U.S. competitiveness. Our research has found 1.5 million U.S. job vacancies in computer occupations, limiting the ability of U.S. companies to grow and innovate.

Many China hawks also favor more immigration restrictions. The Trump administration carried on a virtual war with universities and high-tech employers over immigration and enacted a proclamation that stopped admitting H-1B visa holders and employment-based immigrants.

Mr. Trump also abandoned individual security screenings for many graduate students from China in favor of blanket visa denials for students who once attended a university on a proscribed list. The Biden administration has continued this unwise policy that is likely to undermine U.S. competitiveness in science and engineering more than even the lax standards at U.S. elementary schools ever could.

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