The Software Alliance

BSA

Priorities in Workforce Development and Immigration

Workforce development and responsible immigration policies are essential to broadening the pipeline of skilled workers. The incoming Administration should implement policies that expand and improve access to STEM education, create alternative pathways to digital skills training, leverage the use of technology for workforce development across industries, broaden access to high-speed internet, and promote equal opportunity in the workplace. In addition, BSA supports responsible immigration policies, including those seeking to strengthen the H-1B Visa Program and protect DACA recipients.

Equip American Workers With Skills Needed for 21st Century Jobs

As the digital economy evolves, the gap between available jobs in all sectors of the economy that leverage software-related products and services and workers with technology and other relevant skills qualified to fill those vacancies continues to grow. Increasing the pipeline of workers with the necessary skills to meet market demands is essential to the recovery and growth of the US economy. This goal can only be achieved by preparing new generations for these jobs and helping the current workforce to obtain new skills that will allow them to transition to current and emerging job opportunities. Promoting equal opportunity in the workplace is also very important. The incoming Administration should:

☑ **Improve Access to STEM Education.** Increase learning opportunities for underrepresented groups, including through funding of training and activities linked to the JROTC program.

☑ **Promote Innovation in Workforce Training.** Support flexible approaches to workforce skilling and upskilling to advance short-term and non-traditional training programs, including through expanded federal grant eligibility to attend community colleges or trade schools. This approach would allow the workforce to rapidly gain the skills needed for jobs enabled by emerging technologies, including AI.

☑ **Leverage Technology for Workforce Development across Industries.** Technology can provide critical tools to connect people with opportunities. For example, machine learning can be used to identify and offer skills needed in the workforce, including new and emerging skills. In addition, blockchain-enabled digital credentials offer the potential for workers to easily demonstrate their skills in a timely manner and employers to fill vacancies more efficiently. The incoming Administration can facilitate a skills-based approach to hiring by enabling real-time data on trends in roles and employment to advance the use of interoperable learning records. Policies can also encourage interoperability and expand accreditation measures to increase the footprint of credentials.

☑ **Expand Broadband.** The incoming Administration should prioritize policies that promote deploying broadband in areas lacking broadband infrastructure, particularly rural areas. Even in areas where broadband infrastructure is available, access widely varies among income groups, as well as across and within geographies. Policies should focus on better mapping the availability of broadband service and facilitating affordable and universal broadband access.

☑ **Promote Equal Opportunity in the Workplace.** An appropriately tailored federal standard will complement the private sector's ongoing efforts to promote equal opportunity in the workplace, regardless of race, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Enacting the Equality Act should be a top priority, because it would amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to provide a necessary set of affirmative non-discrimination protections across key societal areas, like employment, credit, access to public accommodations, housing and education.

Reset Immigration Policies to Support Non-Citizen Workers and their Families

The incoming Administration should reset immigration policies to include support for non-citizen workers and their families in the US.

In addition to efforts to make relevant skills training accessible to all American workers, US immigration policies that facilitate, not unduly restrict, access to foreign talent should be prioritized. The software industry, according to a recent Software.org study, supports one in every 10 jobs in the United States. Our industry believes that responsible immigration policies allow US companies to remain competitive and keep jobs in the United States, which benefits the US economy. The incoming Administration should:

☑ **Make DACA Protections Permanent.** DREAMers meaningfully contribute to all sectors of the US economy, including the software industry. They deserve certainty regarding their ability to remain living and working openly in the United States.

☑ **Strengthen the H-1B Visa Program.** The ability to recruit for roles that require specialized skills and are more abundant than the number of US workers currently qualified to fill them is critical. H-1B lottery rules should not prioritize petitioners solely based on arbitrary wage levels nor restrict entire visa classes from admission to the United States arbitrarily.

☑ **Increase the accessibility of Employment-Based Green Cards.** Per-country caps should be eliminated, unused green cards should be recaptured, and foreign nationals graduating from a US-based university with a STEM degree should receive additional access.

☑ **Ensure Family of Nonimmigrant Workers Can Live and Work in the United States.** BSA supports policies that allow spouses and dependent children of H-1B visa holders to enter, remain, and work in the United States, if requirements are met.

☑ **Attract International Students.** Allowing international students to come to the United States to study and remain in the country for the period necessary to complete their education, including to participate in practicum programs after their graduation, is critical.

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ABOUT BSA

BSA | The Software Alliance is the leading advocate for the global software industry before governments and in the international marketplace. Its members are among the world's most innovative companies, creating software solutions that spark the economy and improve modern life.

With headquarters in Washington, DC, and operations in more than 30 countries, BSA pioneers compliance programs that promote legal software use and advocates for public policies that foster technology innovation and drive growth in the digital economy.