

The following article, "*Companies go overseas because of cap on visas*", was authored by **Jerome G. Grzeca** and published in the September 26, 2004 Letters from Readers editorial section of ***The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel***.

Companies go overseas because of cap on visas

As discussed in the Sept. 13, 2004 Business article "Multinational setting up shop in China to tap scientific brainpower," companies increasingly are moving their research and development facilities to China to take advantage of the scientific brainpower there.

In an attempt to stem this exodus, Congress could start by lifting or increasing the cap on H-1B visas.

Through the H-1B program, U.S. employers are able to hire highly educated foreign professionals on a temporary basis. However, the H-1B visa allows companies to keep their operations and investments in the U.S.

In the science-oriented sectors, there still are not enough U.S. students graduating with advanced degrees to fill these highly specialized positions.

Currently, the annual cap on H-1Bs is arbitrarily set at 65,000 nationwide. Because employers can apply early, all H-1B visas for fiscal 2005 may be exhausted within one month.

Once depleted, no H-1B visas will be available until October 2005.

At this time, there appears to be no serious discussions in Congress to eliminate or raise the cap.

Thus, employers may have to wait an entire year before filling a specific professional position.

Without the ability to hire high-level professionals here, it seems obvious that research facilities and companies will go where they can get them, taking along jobs and U.S. prestige.