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BIOCHEMISTRY SOCIETY SUPPORTS IMMIGRATION INNOVATION ACT

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ROCKVILLE, MD - The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology today endorsed the Immigration Innovation Act of 2013, which will reform the current H-1B visa process while improving and strengthening our country's STEM education pipeline. The legislation, introduced in the Senate today by Sens. Hatch, Rubio, Klobuchar, and Coons, will fund STEM education programs in the U.S. through new fees on H-1B visas and green cards that employers can use to hire additional high-skilled workers for positions currently unfilled in the U.S.

"ASBMB applauds the bipartisan effort put forth by the sponsors of this bill," said Jeremy Berg, President of ASBMB and Director of the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Personalized Medicine. "Within the life science community, ASBMB is committed to ensuring America has the best trained and able biomedical research workforce in the world, and significant changes to STEM education in the United States, like those proposed in the Immigration Innovation Act, are necessary if we are to achieve this important goal."

Some key aspects of the proposed legislation supported by ASBMB include:

- Significantly increasing the current H-1B visa cap
- Uncapping the existing U.S. advanced degree exemption
- Reforming fees on H-1B visas and employment-based green cards, and using the funds from these fees to fund a grant program to promote STEM education and worker retraining at the state level.

"America has long been a magnet for the world's most talented young scholars, and without sensible immigration reform, we fear America will educate the world's next generation of scientists, only to have to compete with them later when they are required to return to their countries of origin," Berg continued. "Efforts to reform immigration like today's Immigration Innovation Act are essential to keeping America a global leader for innovation, which benefits the US through ensuring a strong healthy economy and a strong healthy populace. This goes hand in hand with equally important efforts to educate the next generation of Americans in STEM fields."

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About the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

The ASBMB is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization with more than 12,000 members worldwide. Most members teach and conduct research at colleges and universities. Others conduct research in various government laboratories, at nonprofit research institutions and in industry. The Society's student members attend undergraduate or graduate institutions. For more information about ASBMB, visit www.asbmb.org.