

Senator Cruz Questions for the Record for
Leo Perrero
Former Disney IT Engineer
Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest
“The Impact of High-Skilled Immigration on U.S. Workers”
Thursday, February 25, 2016

I. Disney-ABC’s Use of the H-1B Visa Program to Fire American Workers

- In a recent conversation with my staff, Disney-ABC Television Group (Disney-ABC) Vice President Bill Bailey stated that Disney-ABC fired you and hundreds of other American IT employees because your experience and skills were essentially obsolete. Specifically, Mr. Bailey stated that Disney-ABC’s shift toward the use of next-generation technologies that were essential to their theme park business necessitated the firing of its American IT employees, whose expertise was only in “legacy” IT systems that were being phased out. The implication was that the H-1B-based foreign workers that Disney-ABC was using to replace you had greater experience and skill with cutting-edge IT technologies.

1. Please respond to this claim by Disney-ABC that the American IT employees that lacked the necessary experience and skills to maintain their positions.

My former team supported a tier 1 financial application that is one of the most visible applications to Disney guests. This application is still in use today and is still being improved\developed each and every day. The American Disney employees were trainers and the foreign guest workers were the trainees. If the American workers had such inferior skills why would we have to train the foreign guest workers? The guest workers had substantially less wisdom, skill, experience and communication skills. The American Disney employees had to repeat basic troubleshooting concepts over and over to the point that we become very concerned that the guest workers would cause serious harm to the applications that we supported. I personally received the very highest possible performance review and a significant salary increase before the foreign worker displacement. These are some direct quotes from my review, “Leo was instrumental” , “His leading efforts”, “Leo led the effort in a cost savings of over \$10K”, “Leo has been a great asset to our team and his team members have quickly seen him as one of our ‘go to’ guys”, and finally “I look forward to another great year having Leo on our team”.

2. Prior to leaving Disney-ABC, were you and/or your former colleagues required to train the H-1B-based foreign workers that Disney-ABC had hired to replace you?

Yes, my former colleagues and I were forced by Disney to (knowledge transfer) train the H-1B-based foreign workers that Disney-ABC had hired to replace several hundred of us. I was given the order that if I did not satisfactorily train my foreign replacement that I would not be entitled to my financial incentives.

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3. If you know, what were the education and/or experience levels of the foreign workers that were brought in by Disney-ABC to replace you and your former colleagues?

The foreign workers performed at a much lower level than the Americans. These foreign workers appeared to be just entering the IT field because of the lack of good judgment that comes with experience and the number of questions the Americans had to answer for them that were very basic IT concepts. The workers also appeared to have low levels of academic knowledge based on the lack of writing and communications skills.

4. How many of your former co-workers at Disney-ABC have since obtained new positions with Disney-ABC?

We are aware of 4 people that have received new jobs with Disney of the hundreds that were displaced by the foreign guest workers.

Of those 4 only 2 were in the IT field. The others moved into other business areas such as finance or HR.

5. If you know, how many of your former colleagues who were ultimately rehired by Disney-ABC:

- a. Have positions that are substantively comparable to their prior positions?

2 people appeared to receive comparable positions.

- b. Receive salaries and/or benefits comparable to their prior salaries and/or benefits?

2 people appeared to receive comparable salaries and benefits.

6. How many of your former co-workers at Disney-ABC have since obtained new positions in the IT field?

50% or less have obtained new positions in the IT field after 14 months.

7. Have any of your former colleagues talked to you about difficulties of finding employment in the IT field?

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80% have had difficulty in obtaining comparable employment since the mass displacement by foreign workers.

8. Are you aware of other companies that are engaging in similar abuses of the H-1B visa program, but whose abuses might not currently be known in the public domain?

My legal counsel (Sara Blackwell) runs a hotline (www.ProtectUSWorkers.org) for displaced American IT workers where she averages 15 calls per day. She has in depth knowledge of the very latest abuses happening that have not yet been widely publicized. She may be contacted at Sara@TheBlackWellFirm.com.

II. General Question

9. Are there any other points or issues that were not explored (or sufficiently explored) during the hearing that you would like to bring to the Subcommittee’s attention?

Why can’t a very simple bill be passed with just a single change to H1b visa program that nobody would contend as being complex or negative? One example why don’t we make it illegal to put a “Gag order” on American employees who are forced to train foreign replacements on the H1b visa program. At that point we could continue making positive improvements in a piece meal fashion.