

## Legislation Would Create Innovation Contest

Have you ever thought about what you would do with a couple million dollars? You may get to find out if Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) is able to get his bill signed into law, and if you have an innovative solution to a crucial basic research problem.

Lipinski has introduced the Generating Extraordinary New Innovations in the United States (GENIUS) Act. If it becomes law, the Act would create an award program at the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). The GENIUS Act identifies two areas of competition

for the awards: high-risk, high-reward research challenges, and problems whose solutions could improve the economic competitiveness of the U.S. The GENIUS Act would also give consideration to applications that raise public awareness about federally funded research.

Each year, the Director of the NSF would be able to hold as many as five competitions. Competition winners would receive between one and three million dollars. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

## Promising News for International Students in U.S. Immigration Blueprint

In the political aftermath of the new Arizona law that allows local police to detain people they suspect are in the country illegally, Congress has begun to think about making changes to U.S. immigration policies.

Five Democrat members of the U.S. Senate have released a blueprint for future discussions on changes to existing U.S. immigration laws. It includes provisions to ensure control over U.S. borders. It also provides a path to legalization for the 12 million illegal immigrants already in the U.S., and provisions for highly skilled workers. These provisions include:

- Making green cards immediately available to foreign students with advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. To qualify, the students

must have received their degrees from U.S. institutions and possess employment offers in their fields of study.

- Allowing foreign students with a desire to immigrate to the U.S. to enter if they pursue full courses of study in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

It is highly doubtful that Congress will complete immigration reform before the end of 2010. The legislative calendar is already full, with finance industry reform, climate change legislation, confirmation of a new U.S. Supreme Court justice, and completion of the FY11 federal budget. It is, however, a positive sign that changes to the U.S. visa process for international science students are on the congressional radar. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

## He Said It

**“I’m of the opinion that we need to do more at the NIH (regarding funding) but the question is, Where do we get the funding with all the other things the Appropriations Committee has to do?”**

—Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), chair of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education, during a hearing about the FY11 U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget

To watch the entire hearing, go to <http://tinyurl.com/NIHhearing>. ■

