



LOS ANGELES AREA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

**RE: SUPPORT The Entrepreneur Pathways Program (EPP)**

Dear Secretary Johnson,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce (LA Area Chamber), which represents more than 1,650 organizations and 650,000 employees in the region, I am writing to express our **support** of The Entrepreneur Pathways program (EPP) which will provide immigrant visas to tech entrepreneurs who will positively impact the Los Angeles (LA) tech community by attracting the world's best and brightest. As a result, this will provide quality careers and technological innovations for society.

We are in prime position to capitalize on this economic opportunity. The Bixel Exchange, the chamber's resource arm, has been developed to help new tech companies thrive in LA, so that they will continue to grow, produce jobs, and pioneer technological projects.

According to The Los Angeles County Business Federation, in 2014, Los Angeles digital tech companies raised over 3.04 billion USD, a 188% increase from 2013. This year, LA was named the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest startup ecosystem behind New York and Silicon Valley. Furthermore, according to Mark Suster in his *TechCrunch* article "There's Something Going On in LA", he attributes the growth to LA tech's ecosystem, local tech talent, booming commerce, and an increase in venture capital. All of these elements are beneficial to ambitious tech entrepreneurs from other nations.

For the reasons outlined in this letter, we respectfully urge you to **support** The Entrepreneur Pathways program (EPP). If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me or Alycia Witzling, Public Policy Manager at (213) 580-7531 or [awitzling@lachamber.com](mailto:awitzling@lachamber.com)

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary Toeppen  
President & CEO



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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
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Los Angeles, CA 90017

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Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

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**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

**DEC 31 2015**

Gary Toeppen  
President and CEO  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
350 South Bixel Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. Toeppen:

Thank you for your November 17, 2015 letter seeking support of the Entrepreneur Pathways program. Please note that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has taken, and will continue to take, various steps to highlight immigration pathways under existing laws available to entrepreneurs. In 2012, as part of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Entrepreneur in Residence initiative, USCIS launched the Entrepreneur Pathways informational Web page to help entrepreneurs navigate existing visa categories. The Entrepreneur Pathways Web page can be found at <http://www.uscis.gov/eir>.

On November 20, 2014, a memorandum was issued to instruct USCIS to pursue new policies and regulations to enhance opportunities for certain inventors, researchers, and entrepreneurs under existing legal authority. Consistent with that memorandum, DHS is pursuing several important initiatives to:

- Clarify the standard by which certain foreign inventors, researchers, and founders of start-up enterprises who have an advanced degree or "exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business" may qualify for lawful permanent residence through a "national interest waiver"; and
- Provide guidelines under which DHS would apply its existing statutory authority to grant parole, on a case-by-case basis in its discretion, to entrepreneurs whose entry into the United States would provide a significant public benefit.

However, it should also be noted that these initiatives do not create a new immigrant visa for technology entrepreneurs, as they simply improve upon DHS policies and regulations consistent with and pursuant to existing statutory authority.

Once again, thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "León Rodríguez".

León Rodríguez  
Director