

## 'Entrepreneur in Residence' program launches in Silicon Valley- a brief summary

On February 22, 2012, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) formally launched its new initiative 'Entrepreneur in Residence' (EIR). The event was held at Nasa Research Park, Moffet Field in Silicon Valley. The event was hosted by the USCIS Director Alejandro Majorkas himself. Some thirty of the top USCIS officials attended the event as well as several delegates from the White House including Ms. Felicia Escobar, Domestic Policy Council. The EIR initiative is in conjunction with President Obama's [Start-Up America](#) program. In addition, New York Mayor Bloomberg's office was represented by one of his senior advisors Mr. Robert Feldstein.



The speakers for the event included the following distinguished entrepreneurs: Ms. Ping Fu, CEO Geomagic, Vivek Wadha, Academic and Entrepreneur, Shervin Pishevar, Managing Director, Menlo Ventures and Michael Moritz, Partner, Sequoia Capital. Congresswoman Zoe Loffgren was also present as a speaker.

Other people who attended included entrepreneurs, [immigration lawyers](#), the media and others interested in the initiative. Among the entrepreneurs present was one of the co-founders of Blueseed, Mr. Dario Mutabdzija. You may recall him as the founder of the ship that will home entrepreneurs on the coast near Silicon Valley. Mr. Amit Aharoni, CEO CruiseWise.com was also present. You may recall him as the immigrant entrepreneur whose visa was denied but after his appearance on the television channel ABC and an interview with Diane Sawyer, his case was approved overnight.

The event was combined with a special naturalization ceremony as well as an award ceremony for "Americans of Choice."

ensure, on behalf our clients, our voice was heard too.

Given the clientele we serve, Watson Immigration Law felt it was important to be present in this dialogue so we made a concerted effort to fly to Silicon Valley to



The Director said that USCIS is committed to the EIR endeavor. He said he wanted to learn about the "rapidly changing environment and help the adjudication process respond better to business reality." He also said that the goal of EIR is to ensure USCIS is helping realize the law's full potential to achieve economic prosperity with the immigrants help through statutes and laws." In essence, the efforts are to help keep high-skilled immigrants in the U.S.

Mr. Moritz stated "take the immigrants out of Silicon Valley, you have no Silicon Valley. Inject immigrants to Silicon Valley and the prospects are endless." He further stated that the number one business problem is bringing the most talented people that can start and build companies in America.

Mr. Wadha stated that "America no longer has monopoly on knowledge" and that America has created competitors worldwide now. He said that "EIR is a patch but it won't solve the problem." He commented on the reverse brain drain that America is currently suffering. Mr. Ping Fu and Mr. Pishevar both echoed the same sentiments.

Several entrepreneurs commented about the stress that immigration causes and the problems they are facing preventing them from focusing on creating jobs. Congresswoman Loffgren spoke about the challenges she sees in this area and discussed her IDEA Act currently pending in Congress.

The naturalization and award ceremony was touching. Mr. Pishevar's acceptance speech was particularly emotional and moving.

The day continued with working sessions to discuss ideas about various issues that could help improve the current system. Since the Start-Up Act is really in the hands of Congress, USCIS is making all efforts possible to work within the existing laws and regulations to create solutions to for entrepreneurs.



Here are some other links to this story published in the last 24 hours:

1. [Washington Post](#)
2. [The Associated Press](#)
3. [Contra Costa Times](#)

Watson Immigration Law thanks Director Majorkas and USCIS for this unprecedented dialogue and very promising event. We hope to see some positive solutions so that our entrepreneur clients can have better paths to immigration in the near future. We will update you when we of anything else.

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