

## E-MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS

**US discrimination rooted in the 'glut' of scientists and engineers**GENE A. NELSON

"Say's Law" is an economic concept that "supply creates its own demand." This concept has been discredited in many different economic contexts. The applicable economic law is the inverse relationship between supply and demand -- e.g. as supply increases, the market clearing price for a performer of science or engineering decreases. There is a massive, government and employer-engineered glut of scientists and engineers in the USA. As I discussed in a speech on August 5, 1999 in the US Congress, National Science Foundation data shows only about a quarter of those trained as or employed in science or engineering fields actually are still employed in science or engineering. See [www.house.gov/judiciary/6.htm](http://www.house.gov/judiciary/6.htm). The root of this glut is the employer's desire to reduce salary and benefit expenditures. (Also see [www.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/user/e/r/erw/Public/SG/NSF.html](http://www.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/user/e/r/erw/Public/SG/NSF.html))

The reality is that employers of scientists and engineers, including the federal government, have institutionalised illegal employment discrimination on the basis of both age and gender, among other biases. The ability of employers to practice this discrimination is rooted in the gluts that have been engineered by governmental actions, often in response to lobbying. (See the post-1976 US <http://www.mit.edu:8001/afs/athena.mit.edu/user/e/r/erw/Public/Pandoralid.html>)

A common factor for each of the pieces of legislation that implemented the recent US science and engineering glut is that none of it was passed with open debate and through normal processes. Instead, special processes were invoked.

Until the root causes of this glut are openly debated and corrected, articles regarding the under-representation of women or slightly older scientists and engineers amount to little more than polite hand-wringing and public-relations posturing.

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