

Billions Lost: The American Tech Crisis and the Road Map to Change

Hilarie Gamm

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Billions Lost is a timely, insightful, and important book that deserves serious consideration.

In *Billions Lost*, Hilarie Gamm makes a compelling case that America's technology industry has surrendered to foreign economies.

This book traces the "downfall of American tech" and presents a twenty-action-items "road map" to enable a dramatic turnaround. The work begins with an overview illustrating how circumstances coincided to make the tech industry ripe for unintended foreign takeover, largely through job outsourcing. This argument is the core of the book; its complexity is unraveled through a detailed exploration of contributing factors.

An excellent and thorough primer on "the evolution of the tech industry and application delivery" provides the context for what follows—a hard-hitting examination of factors, such as tech visas offered by the United States, the massive outsourcing of IT functions by US companies, the education of foreign students by US universities, and the failure of the US education system to prepare students for technology jobs. All of these areas are discussed with a high level of reason and judgment. The author's perspective on the "dwindling U.S. middle class" is particularly relevant to contemporary policy debates.

Each of these elements is scrutinized with a precise, critical eye; statements are backed with a wealth of statistics. Still, some observations are surprising, if not sensational. For example, the book claims, of visas, that "it was the proliferation of H-1B visas issued that accelerated the quantity of work leaving the U.S." Just as startling are comments about US higher education: "The American export of higher education is being sold to foreign students." The book proposes that "coding should take the place of the 'required foreign language' in public school curriculums."

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the book's basic premise, it is difficult to question the intent of "The Road Map to Change," the list of twenty "goals and action items" devised for national consideration that includes sweeping goals like "Reverse Ageism in the U.S. Technology Industry," and "Engage Females in the Technology Sector." These action items are well described; the text highlights the key benefits of each. This "Road Map to Change" is an auspicious plan for revitalizing the ways America does business with the world and educates its children.

The book evinces a strong command of facts based on extensive research. It concisely and pointedly evaluates current conditions and proposes future solutions in a lucid way. For example, the book's examination of what American youths need "to succeed in the digital age" is deft in its discussions of key elements including familial support, work experience, "consistent discipline in and out of school," and "contemplative thought."

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BARRY SILVERSTEIN (July 26, 2018)

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