



Stanford eCorner

Speaking Up Matters

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Kate Mitchell, managing director of Scale Venture Partners, challenges entrepreneurs to share their stories widely to create impact on national policy issues. As a case in point, Mitchell cites her passionate desire to drive action on immigration reform to unleash a wave of innovation by foreign entrepreneurs in the United States.



Transcript

The policy thing I am the most passionate about and I think a number of you in the room will agree with me is immigration and immigration reform. There is nothing and even when I sat in the Rose Garden and I had the administration and Cantor staff both asking me - because it was such a wonderful opportunity by the way. It was a great dialog between people in Silicon Valley and Washington. And by the way we sit here and we get so frustrated because it seems so obvious what people in Washington should do for us, in fact so obvious that we think they should know this. They don't. They don't understand the world we live in. We are small. When I'm walking in a senator's office and big oil is walking out I'm like an ant. Even backing up all of us I am small and all of us need to speak up more. We think so much about what we do here speaking up matters.

And when it comes to immigration, I don't need to tell you how important it is to innovation, to education. I have an employee of ours who Indian-educated from Pune, engineer, business educated at Haas, worked at both Intuit and for us, challenges with his green card, is now living in Dubai and is a student and a citizen of the world is how he says it to me. It's a crime that he is not building his companies here. He has an incredible skill set. And I really think we need to look at immigration reform more broadly. I come from Italian Irish immigrants, that's part of what America has been built on but particularly when we think about the innovation ecosystem, keeping engineers, entrepreneurs, people who are building companies, what I encourage you to do - so my call to action, a lot of you are active on social media, is to get your word out, get your story out. What you don't realize is your story is even more valuable - they've heard from Apple, they've heard Bill Gates tell the story. They've heard people like me tell the story. Your story is actually more meaningful. And it may be your own personal story.

It may be the person in the class sitting next to you who may not be able to continue to build their career here or are threatened and concerned about their ability to do so. That parable, that story needs to be told. I had dinner two nights ago with Senator Warner who - from Virginia - who was out here at Madera having dinner. He is one of the sponsors of something called Startup 3.0 and he said you guys are too timid. We're not hearing you in Washington. Tell your story. So I am calling on all of you who have a story to tell. It is not too small. There aren't enough other people telling it and Tom said it's amazing. We had a ragtag group of people, 17 of us who put together the IPO taskforce for the JOBS Act.

Who knew that we would be successful in passing a law. You guys, your story around immigration will really resonate so do tell it.