

## Immigration and Workforce Mobility

### Issue

Restrictions over the last several years on business immigration should be reversed, and broader legislative reforms are needed to help employers and workers thrive during post-pandemic recovery.

### Background

Immigration policies have always played a critical role in workforce mobility. To fill critical skills gaps and build the strongest U.S. workforce that will drive the most economic growth and job creation, employers may need to relocate or transfer foreign-born workers who complement their American workforce. Research overwhelmingly shows that foreign-born talent makes significant contributions to U.S. economic growth and job creation. In fact, economists at Oxford University and Citi found that without immigrants contributing to the quantity and quality of the labor supply, the majority of the economic growth gains America saw between 2011 and 2016 following the recession would have been eliminated.<sup>1</sup> Further, in a recent Gallup survey, nearly 8 in 10 Americans said immigrants are good for the country – the highest level of support since Gallup began asking the question more than 50 years ago.<sup>2</sup> U.S. immigration policy must support economic growth and individual prosperity as we recover from the pandemic.

### Solutions

*In the near term*, we recommend that the new Administration and Congress act on the following to facilitate business immigration and spur post-pandemic economic recovery:

- **Reverse the Visa Entry and Country-Specific Bans** – If the immigrant and nonimmigrant presidential proclamations are extended at the end of this year, reverse them and restrictions limiting individuals from certain countries from immigrating or traveling to the United States.
- **Remove the Green Card Per-Country Caps** – If the bill does not pass on an end-of-the-year vehicle, re-introduce and enact the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act (S. 386/H.R. 1044) to remove green card per-country limits, allowing for many foreign-born workers to more easily contribute to U.S. economic growth in a first-come first-served employment-based green card process.
- **Protect the H-4 Work Authorization Rule** – If the H-4 work authorization rule for H-1B spouses is rescinded before the current Administration leaves office, then reinstate it so that H-4 visa holders, the majority of whom are women, can work in the United States, should opportunities be available.
- **Grant Relief to “Dreamers”** – Introduce and enact legislation to make law the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to provide legal status and work authorization to recipients, many of whom already play important roles in the U.S. workforce.

*In the longer term*, the United States needs an immigration system that recognizes the value of immigrants and nonimmigrants and is built for the modern world. Immigration policies should balance the needs of national security and U.S. economic growth; treat people fairly; support productivity; protect workers; encourage innovation; and be

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Goldin, Andrew Pitt, Benjamin Nabarro and Kathleen Boyle, “[Migration and the Economy](#),” Citi and Oxford Martin School, Oxford University, September 2018, as cited in Stuart Anderson, “[Immigrants and America’s Comeback from the COVID-19 Crisis](#),” National Foundation for American Policy, July 2020.

<sup>2</sup> “[Americans Want More, Not Less, Immigration for First Time](#),” Gallup, July 2020.



predictable and reliable to prevent abuse of the system. Broader reforms to create an immigration system that will help America and Americans include:

- **Modernize the Nonimmigrant and Immigrant Employment-Based System** – Employers and workers need a predictable and reliable system that provides the green cards and L, H-1B and other nonimmigrant visas needed to recruit, deploy, transfer and retain top world talent.
- **Increase Certainty and Save Resources with Trusted Employer** – A Trusted Employer program would help eliminate any abuses by recognizing employers who are known to the government, saving precious resources. This program would also help increase business certainty in workforce planning and mobility.

Worldwide ERC® and the workforce mobility and relocation professionals we represent look forward to working with the new Administration and Congress in the New Year. For more information, please go to the [Worldwide ERC® Public Policy website](#) or contact Worldwide ERC® Vice President of Member Engagement and Public Policy Rebecca Peters at [rpeters@worldwideerc.org](mailto:rpeters@worldwideerc.org) or 202-459-3845.