

Senators Urge President Trump to Restrict Guest Worker Programs

Article By:

Kristin Bolayir

On May 7, 2020, four U.S. senators wrote a [letter to President Trump](#), requesting that he suspend “all new guest worker visas” for 60 days, and others for a year “or until unemployment has returned to normal levels.” The requested changes to the guest worker program come amid all-time high unemployment in the United States due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The senators, who include Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas), Josh Hawley (R-Missouri), Ted Cruz (R-Texas), and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), argue the Presidential Proclamation issued April 22, 2020, which [suspended entry of certain immigrants to the U.S. for 60 days](#), did not go far enough. The Presidential Proclamation became effective April 23, 2020. Although this 60-day moratorium on immigration was limited to immigrant visas for applicants outside the United States, there was an expectation when it was issued that the Trump administration planned on releasing a second executive order or proclamation centered around non-immigrant visas, since the proclamation included language giving the president and relevant agencies 30 days to review non-immigrant programs.

The letter urges the president to expand his Executive Order and impose additional restrictions on U.S. guest-worker programs. Specifically, the letter requests that the administration halt all new guest-worker visas for 60 days, after which time the senators say the president should continue to suspend new non-immigrant guest-worker visas for a year or until national unemployment figures bounce back to “normal levels.” Among the visas they would like to suspend are H-2Bs, which allow non-agricultural seasonal workers into the United States; H-1Bs, which are for highly skilled applicants in specialty occupations; and the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program, which extends foreign student visas for one to three years after graduation and allows for work authorization during that time. The senators also request that President Trump immediately suspend, or at least until reforms are adopted, EB-5 visas – a program by which an immigrant can become a green-card holder by investing in a qualified business in the United States.

While a second directive has not yet been announced regarding non-immigrant visas, the administration and relevant agencies have 30 days from the issuance of the Proclamation to review these programs.

National Law Review, Volume X, Number 129

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/senators-urge-president-trump-to-restrict-guest-worker-programs>