

House Judiciary Committee: Don't Bank on Immigration Reform

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On July 14, 2015, the House Judiciary Committee met to discuss oversight of the ***United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS)***. Immigration was a major topic alongside border security and global threats of terrorism, domestic terrorism and cyber-security.

What's the temperature right now for immigration reform with the Committee?

Cold. Possibly even a deep freeze.

One congressman stated that we need to take "adult responsibility" to enforcement of immigration laws. That's not a promising start. The concerns that surfaced involved more enforcement of the H-1B program to prevent abuse, DHS taking more steps to apprehend removable or deportable individuals in sanctuary cities, and more enforcement across the board.

For U.S. employers with very concrete concerns about retaining foreign talent, this perspective could not be more detached. The Committee is flying over this discussion at 35,000 feet, with no compass, no direction and no flight plan. From the notes, one would think that there is chaos, with criminals running the streets and DHS standing on the curb, refusing to engage in any enforcement-related activities. The Committee needs to get into the weeds to understand what needs to be fixed with our immigration system. Business goes on for U.S. employers, but failing to fix our immigration laws is costly. Here is what we lose:

- Emerging companies and start-ups struggle with visa issues and as a result locate R&D facilities abroad
- U.S. employers have insufficient H-1B visa numbers to employ the best and brightest
- We have a green card investment program (EB-5) close to expiration in September 2015, which deters foreign investors from infusing capital into the United States
- We have a clumsy technology platform for issuing visas that resulted, this summer again, in thousands of qualified visa applicants being stranded abroad.

If the notes to the Committee's meeting are any indication of where we are headed, we should not expect Congress to pass any meaningful immigration-related legislation in the coming year. There is severe mechanical failure on the immigration law reform front.

Expect any congressional progress toward immigration reform to be canceled or at least delayed for some time. Don't bank on any meaningful changes to the law in the coming year.

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