

CompeteAmerica

The Alliance for a Competitive Workforce

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Statement of Compete America on Eliminating Per Country Caps

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Compete America, a coalition of American employers dedicated to ensuring that the United States has the highly skilled workforce it needs to continue to lead the world in innovation and job creation, issued the following statement regarding the introduction of the bipartisan, bicameral “Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019” (H.R. 1044 and S. 386) by Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA), House Judiciary Committee Immigration Subcommittee Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), and Immigration Subcommittee Ranking Member Ken Buck (R-CO):

“Compete America commends Senators Lee and Harris and Representatives Lofgren and Buck for their strong and steadfast leadership in reintroducing the ‘Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act,’ a small but critical step in the right direction for our nations high skilled workers and STEM related industries. The proposed bill offers a sensible reform to address per country cap backlog issues for permanently employed foreign professionals already working in the United States, who have fully approved green card petitions. These are not new immigrants; they are part of our workforce today.

Many of our foreign-born colleagues, friends, and neighbors are living in a broken system—a system that continually pushes them to the back of the line—despite their education, skills, and contributions—simply because of their country of birth. This is an unjust system and contradicts our nation’s values and undermines our economic interests.

H.R. 1044 and S. 386 are smart first steps that will help ensure our high skilled immigration system is both fair and fulfills its intended purpose by allowing our best innovators, domestic and foreign, to fully realize their potential together to the benefit of us all.”

H.R. 1044 and S. 386, “The Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act,” makes one simple, sensible reform: it makes the distribution of green cards first-come, first-served within each category of employment-based immigration. This fix is necessary because the current system artificially limits any one country to no more than 7 percent of available green cards. This has resulted in deeply imbalanced and unfair outcomes—with the majority of countries in the world facing no backlogs, while others with the same kinds of education, skills, and jobs are trapped in generations-long backlogs.

A prior version of this bill (H.R. 3012) passed the House during the 112th Congress with a bipartisan vote of 389 to 15. Last Congress, this bill enjoyed the bipartisan support of 329 Republican and Democratic cosponsors in the House of Representatives.

To learn more about the benefits of highly educated foreign-born professionals to the U.S. economy, visit www.competeamerica.org.

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