

A Half-Trillion Dollar Boost for the US Economy: More Green Cards for Skilled Immigrants

Why aren't we talking about the biggest and easiest accelerator available for the US economy?

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- At the start of the last Congress two years ago, I helped found All of Us: a grassroots

organization with more than 5,000 members from 60+ countries: mostly graduate students at MIT, Stanford, Rensselaer, University of Texas at Austin, Penn State, Cornell, University of Notre Dame, Carnegie Mellon, Clemson, Indiana University, Pitt, Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins, Brandeis, Virginia Tech, Duke, LSU, the University of Illinois, and West Virginia University.

Our professional fields include medical and scientific research (chemistry, computer science, physics, neurology, climate change, marketing science, and artificial intelligence, among others).

I am typical of All of Us membership – I have a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering with experience as a senior Multibody Dynamics Engineer. My specialty is in Virtual Prototyping of Mechanical Systems with aerospace and automotive applications.

Our work saves lives and creates jobs.

Just a few weeks ago, I became a US citizen. So, on behalf of All of Us, I would like to add a simple point to our national debate on immigration policy that is sadly neglected:

Congress must deliver what it promises – promptly.

It doesn't.

Congress tries to manage legal immigration by promising more than it delivers. When that inevitably causes problems, Congress makes more promises. Things get worse instead of better.

**In All of US
We BELIEVE.**



Support Alliance of US Immigrants

I realize that there are even worse family backlogs, but since they are (mostly) outside the United States let me focus on just one example.

There are already more than 1 million people living in the US, eligible for green cards sponsored by employers. A half million of them are working here legally.

But they are indentured to their sponsors until the green card arrives after decades of delay.

Like all backlogs, this is a not enough problem. So, the answer is more green cards. That's just basic math – which both the biggest players outside Congress as well as many within our national legislature desperately want to avoid.

Big Tech employers push zero sum legislation, instead: replacing per country distribution of green cards with first come, first served without more. That way, no one can wait less, until someone else waits longer. [The Congressional Research Service](#) has documented that means doubling the backlog – and perpetuating it.

All of Us instead endorses President Biden's bill – the US Citizenship Act of 2021 – as well as separate legislation introduced by Senator Rand Paul and shortly, by Senator Dick Durbin, also. There are many ways to deliver more green cards.

We cite the Biden bill specifically because it is the best. Whatever else Congress does, we urge Congress to act on its employment-based provisions, achieving fairness by adding more green cards.

We particularly urge Congress – especially Republicans -- to look down the road on what some call merit-based immigration. America risks crippling higher education and our technology advantages by mistreating the best and brightest from all over the world.

It is true that because of COVID, by the end of this fiscal year, roughly a quarter million family based green cards will have been reallocated to the employment-based categories. That unreported robbing family to help workers has been a substantial relief to many in the backlog.

Yet we're like the Titanic approaching the iceberg: the professional society for physicists [surveyed](#) its foreign graduate students and found nearly 90% might simply leave the US and never return, if they were burdened with the delays that now afflict those born in India, and some from China.

That is what zero sum legislation would do.

Critical health care professionals like nurses and doctors also urgently need a supply of green cards. Let's be blunt: without enough nurses and doctors in this pandemic, people will die.

Or consider the space program. In the Wall Street Journal, Varmi Verma, chief engineer for robotic operations for the Perseverance rover now exploring Mars "... reels off a list of colleagues' countries of origin: ;Greece, Russia, India, Costa Rica, Cambodia, Mexico'—she pauses, then continues—'Argentina, France, Italy, the U.K., Colombia. It's almost every place I can think of.'"

But All of Us isn't just sounding a warning. We are urging Congress to step on the economy's accelerator. This is not a question of displacing American workers or labor supply effects on wages. Backlogged workers have been here for a decade. Emancipating them with green cards means they take higher paying jobs, start their own businesses and – critically – the jobs they leave must be filled.

Those are all increases in economic growth. Big increases.

In 2011, economists Sankar Mukhopadhyay and David Oxborrow calculated the economic [value of a green card](#) to be \$11,860.

Apply that calculus to the Biden bill's immediate emancipation of half a million workers with green cards. The economic benefit is roughly a half-trillion dollar increase in GDP in the first year: good for us all.

America is not a zero sum nation.

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