

Congressman John H. Rutherford (FL-4)
House Judiciary Committee: Member Day Testimony
September 20, 2019

Thank you Chairman Nadler and Ranking Member Collins for the opportunity to discuss one of my priorities with the distinguished committee today.

I am here on behalf of the over 100,000 E-2 Visa holders in the U.S. who are creating jobs, abiding by our laws, and are being untreated fairly by our nation's immigration laws.

For those of you unaware, the E-2 visa is a nonimmigrant visa that allows people to enter the U.S. in order to make a substantial investment in our economy by opening or buying a business. In many cases, these visa holders have children in the U.S., build long-standing relationships with the community, and grow our local economies. However, currently no matter how much they invest or how many jobs they create, there is no pathway to citizenship for these hardworking immigrants.

Importantly, under current law, the children of E-2 visa holders are only allowed to stay in the U.S. until they are 21 years old. These children have often been raised in the U.S. for most of their lives and were educated here. They are then forced to take their talents elsewhere just as they are about to enter the workforce. This forces families to make the difficult decision between shuttering their businesses or splitting up their families.

To address these problems, I have introduced H.R. 2124 the E-2 Visa Improvement Act. This would allow up to 10,000 E-2 visa holders per year who have been in the country for 10 years and created at least two jobs to apply for legal permanent residency. It would also allow children of E-2 visa holders to apply for work authorization and stay in the U.S. until they are 26 years old.

As the Judiciary Committee continues to look for the best way to bolster our broken immigration laws and secure our borders, we should not forget those who have come to our country legally, contribute to their communities, and grow our economy. As we consider fixes for DACA and other ways to improve our nation's immigration system, we should consider these legal Dreamers and their families who also face uncertain futures. I ask for your consideration of this important bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.