

November 3, 2023

Chairman Jordan:

I appreciate the opportunity to draw the Committee's attention to two pieces of bipartisan legislation that are high priorities of mine.

First, I invite your support of **H.R. 1535, the Eliminating Backlogs Act**.

I have been proud to work closely with Rep. Krishnamoorthi on this legislation that would recapture and preserve Congressionally allotted employment-based visas, exempt certain applicants from per-country caps set by Section 202 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and allow for green card allocation to individuals who are working in high-need industries across the country. It would not create a single new visa; rather, it encourages better utilization of existing visas that Congress has already allotted.

Every year, Congress allocates 140,000 green cards for use by foreign nationals who have the training and skills the American labor force and our economy needs to succeed. Additionally, unused family-preference visas that go unused are made available for employment-based categories. However, under existing law, each nation is capped at receiving only seven percent of the allotted employment-based green cards in any year. Due to this per-country limitation, thousands of employment-based visas have gone unused. The result is highly skilled legal immigrants who are already here in the United States and contributing to our economy often aren't able to remain in the U.S, all while employers across our nation continue to struggle to find the workers they need for their businesses to succeed.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, there were 496,534 individuals with approved employment-based petitions awaiting visa availability as of March 2022. These individuals have been vetted and are already employed, but cannot obtain a green card simply because of their nationality. Additionally, according to the Congressional Research Service, there were 194,000 employment-based visas that remained unused at the end of FY2021. My legislation would recapture those and reduce the number of individuals in the backlog without creating any new green cards.

The individuals helped by this legislation are trying to navigate our immigration system legally. They are currently working in the United States as doctors, engineers, programmers, and in other highly skilled positions, and they have shown that they want to continue adding to their communities and helping the businesses that they work for thrive. So I urge support for my legislation that will ensure the complete use of existing Congressionally-approved green cards.

Additionally, I would appreciate your support for **H.R. 2584, the Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act**.

Violence in hospitals has been increasing steadily over the past few years, with a sharp rise occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to recent surveys, 44% of nurses reported experiencing physical violence and 68% reported experiencing verbal abuse during the pandemic. And in a 2022 survey of emergency physicians, two-thirds reported being assaulted in the previous year, and more

than one-third reported having been assaulted more than once. While physical and psychological harm are the primary consequences, violence and intimidation can disrupt patient care settings, divert essential resources, and lead to higher staff turnover rates and staff shortages.

Despite the growing trend of violence against hospital workers, no federal law exists to protect hospital personnel and impose penalties on those who intentionally seek to harm these dedicated workers. This stands in stark contrast to federal protections that criminalize assault and intimidation against airport and aircraft personnel.

For these reasons, Rep. Dean and I partnered to introduce this legislation. The SAVE Act would set forth increased penalties for individuals who knowingly assault or intimidate hospital personnel. Importantly, the legislation includes specific protections for individuals with physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities who commit such acts.

Additionally, the bill would authorize grants for hospitals to implement programs to reduce violent incidents. Funds could be used for purposes such as training personnel, coordinating security efforts with local law enforcement, and the installation and use of panic buttons, video surveillance or other technology.

I urge the committee to prioritize our nation's healthcare workforce by passing this legislation.

Sincerely,
Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress