Roughly 50,000 Indians will die waiting for employment based green cards: report

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July 10, 2019

A recent Cato Institute analysis shows that about 675,000 would-be legal immigrants would die without seeing a green card.

In 2018, Indian employer-sponsored immigrants in EB-3 and EB-2 categories waited about a decade to apply for a green card. Since Indians have reached the country limit in EB-2 and EB-3 categories, the law requires them to wait for a decade to get green card while applicants from all other countries, except China are eligible immediately, cutting ahead of Indians in line. Indians on EB-2 and EB-3 that entered the green card line in 2018 have to wait half a century in the line for green card.

These are some of the facts highlighted by a recent policy analysis from Cato Institute.

The report by the Washington-based libertarian think tank — which comes in the backdrop of a general sense of unrest among within the immigrant community over delays in the USCIS processing times — highlights the perils of another kind of green card wait: the one that is caused by green card back logs due to country based quotas.

Since the immigration law, which was last updated more than three decades ago, puts a limit on the number of green cards that can be issued to a certain nationality, a huge backlog is created for high demand countries.

David Bier, an immigration policy analyst at Cato Institute, in his recent analysis titled, "Immigration Wait Times from Quotas Have Doubled: Green Card Backlogs are Long, Growing and Inequitable," highlights the acute need for America to introduce immigration reforms while informing how outdated quotas have increased the average wait time for immigrants.

Currently Indian nationals are among those who wait the longest to obtain green card or the permanent legal residence in the US. Bier explains how the quota system affects this result.

The quota system imposes limits on the number of green cards for individual nationalities, causing longer wait times for countries with the highest demands. Indians averaged the longest wait of about 8 years and 6 months because of quotas.

For those who may contest that the green card reforms may only benefit certain nationalities besides harming American job interests, the analysis points out that it is the long waits that separate American families and also artificially suppress lawful migration to the country of workers whose skills contribute to the US economy.

It is common knowledge that it is only the Indians, Chinese, Mexicans and Filipinos in the United States that reach the country limit for green card. The wait time for immigrants particularly in these categories would continue to grow many folds if the immigration reforms are not introduced.