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Indian Immigrants Wait 150 Years For Green Card Through EB-2 Visas: Think Tank

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Legal immigrant workers from India with advanced degrees face a wait time for a green card that exceeds their lifetimes—more than 150 years, according to a conservative think tank.

At the current rate of visa issuances in the employment-based, second preference visa, or EB-2 visa program for immigrants with advanced degrees, Indian applicants have to wait 151 years for a green card and permanent residency, the public policy research organization [Cato Institute](#) [calculated](#) based on data from [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) (USCIS) released in May.

“Obviously, unless the law changes, they will have died or left by that point,” wrote David Bier, an immigration policy analyst for the think tank’s Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, last Friday.

As of April 20, the number of Indian immigrants and their spouses and minor children awaiting green cards was 632,219. Immigrants in the EB-3 visa program for applicants with bachelor’s degree have a wait of about 17 years, according to the institute.

The shortest wait time for Indian immigrants is in the EB-1 program for those with “extraordinary ability,” at six years. EB-1 is the program through which the president’s wife, [Melania Trump](#), was [granted legal residency](#) in the United States seventeen years ago, when she was a Slovenian model.

Immigration attorneys told Bier that EB-2 workers qualify to apply under the EB-3 program because they hold bachelor’s degrees and can refile in that category. In that case, the wait times in the two categories could average out to 58 years, but the costs of refiling could discourage that.

USCIS’s issuance limits per country “are still discriminating against EB-3 Indians,” Bier wrote.

“Only once every other national who wants a green card in that category gets one do they get relief, so tens of thousands of immigrants from other countries are still bypassing them in line, even though Indians have waited longer,” Bier explained.

“The absurd wait times for Indian immigrants highlights the importance of ending this pointless discrimination in the legal immigration system,” Bier wrote, adding that the Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act addresses that, but that Congress “shouldn’t just adopt a spread-the-pain policy either.”

“It should increase the number of green cards issued as well,” Bier concluded.

USCIS considers the think tank's calculations to be "arithmetic tricks," "fabrications," and "grossly inaccurate."

“In keeping with the law as well as the intention of Congress, which determined the visa numbers that can be allocated every year, USCIS is committed to protecting the integrity of our immigration system and ensuring its faithful application under the rule of law," USCIS spokesman Michael Bars said in an email to *Newsweek* on Thursday. "The truth is that these arithmetic tricks and fabrications are grossly inaccurate, and in effect undermine this effort."

"Applicants may contact us if they believe there is undue delay to the processing of their petition or application," Bars added.

The Trump administration has sought to limit immigration in various ways, including placing greater restrictions on the popular H-1B visa program for highly skilled immigrants—many from India—to work at companies in the U.S.