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Study: White House plan slashes legal immigration rates by 44 percent — 22 million fewer immigrants over a half-century

David Nakamura

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A White House proposal would slash legal immigration rates by 44 percent this year and result in 22 million fewer immigrants over the next five decades when compared to current law, according to [a Cato Institute study](#) released Monday.

The analysis from David Bier and Stuart Anderson found that nearly half a million immigrants who are expected to be awarded green cards in fiscal 2018 would not be eligible under the framework President Trump's aides released late last week amid ongoing congressional negotiations. In all, about 1.1 million foreigners are on pace to receive green cards this year authorizing legal permanent residence in the United States.

Cato, a libertarian think tank in Washington, has generally favored robust immigration levels on economic grounds.

“Restricting legal immigration will unnecessarily deny opportunity to many people and have far-reaching negative consequences for economic growth in the United States,” the authors wrote. “The White House proposal is the opposite of the reforms that would lead America toward prosperity.”

The Cato study comes as some lawmakers in both parties have called on Trump to drop his demands to curb legal immigration and narrow the scope of negotiations to the fate of younger undocumented immigrants known as “dreamers” and border security upgrades.

White House aides said Trump's plan represents a compromise aimed at breaking an impasse in Congress ahead of a Feb. 8 deadline for a must-pass spending bill to keep the government open. Some Democrats and a few Republicans have said they would not support a long-term budget deal without a resolution on the dreamers.

Trump terminated the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for about 690,000 dreamers last fall and set March 5 as the deadline when the bulk of their work permits would begin to expire. A federal judge has issued a temporary restraining order reinstating the program, although legal analysts said the decision probably would be overturned if challenged.

Trump's immigration plan would offer a path to citizenship for an estimated 1.8 million dreamers that could take 12 years, along with \$25 million for his proposed border wall and other security measures, and the cuts to legal immigration programs. Trump is proposing to eliminate a diversity visa lottery that awards about 50,000 green cards annually to immigrants from countries

with low immigration rates to the United States, and he is seeking to eliminate the long-standing ability of U.S. citizens to sponsor their parents and siblings for green cards.

Democrats have fiercely opposed the cuts to legal immigration. The Cato study said that based on fiscal 2018 statistics, Trump's plan would have denied green cards to 174,000 parents, 67,000 siblings and 76,000 adult children of U.S. citizens, along with the 50,000 in the diversity visa lottery. In addition, about 94,000 spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents would have been kept out.

“Diversity and family-sponsored immigrants — who the White House framework would ban — are better educated than the average immigrant (and Americans), so the effects of the White House ban could be even more negative,” according to Bier, an immigration policy analyst at Cato, and Anderson, executive director at the National Foundation for American Policy.

The nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute has estimated that Trump's proposal would cut the number of green cards by at least 288,000.