



## **8 Lakh Indians Awaiting Green Card In USA; Will President Joe Biden Take Urgent Action?**

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According to data from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), nearly 8 Lakh Indians working legally in the United States are in the stand by for issuing green cards.

With 1.2 million people waiting in the queue to become citizens of the United States, it is the highest backlog ever recorded. Indians are the major contributors to this demographic as nearly 7 among 10 people waiting in the queue are Indian origins.

CATO Institute's Centre for Global Liberty and Prosperity reported that the backlog is so acute that any Indian who applies for employment-based citizenship now may have to wait up to 8 decades to get a green card. The reports also stated that around quarter of the current applicants may be dead even before reaching their turn.

After Indians who comprise 68% of the total applicants count, the next major contributors to this backlog are Chinese nationals with 14%. The remaining 18% of the residents are from other countries.

### **What Is Causing This Backlog?**

CATO stated that these dreadful statistics are not because of any lousy proceedings. They are a result of the annual citizenship limit for immigrants from each country which has not changed since the first time it was articulated.

Currently 7% or 140,000 individual caps are allotted to each country. These country caps were introduced to ensure diversity in the nationality of immigrants. But they are not favour of countries like India and China which are facing much longer green card backlogs since they have more immigrants compared to other countries.

### **What Is Kept In Future For Indian Immigrants?**

Because of the anti-immigration drive started by Donald Trump, exactly 121,609 unused green cards from 2020 have been carried forward to year 2021 under EB-2 and EB-3 categories. But there is a ray of hope for Indians now since the new president elect Joe Biden has included reforms in green cards in his election agenda. If Biden moves in this direction, India will be benefited the most.

On the other hand, some US senators believe that removing per country quota can be unfair to the immigrants who are not from employment driven countries. Senators with this argument want to increase the annual green card cap for all the countries.

### **Is There Any Fair Way Out Of This?**

Two identical applicants with the same academic degrees, family status, earning potential one hailing from India and the other from Sweden.

The immigrant from Sweden will get the green card immediately while the Indian immigrant will have to wait for years altogether. This isn't fair at all. Hence there is an utter need of reforms in the system that's for sure. After all US policy makers must decide what is more important for them: maintain diversity or attract the best talent.