



Explained: What is the EAGLE Act? How does it help Indians?

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A new legislation that aims to remove the country cap for permanent residency visas has been introduced in the US House of Representatives. The new law could potentially help Indians who are not able to get green cards due to the country caps and the lottery system in the US.

The Equal Access to Green cards for Legal Employment (EAGLE) Act of 2021, which was introduced by Democrat Representative Zoe Lofgren and Republican John Curtis, is expected to "benefit the US economy by allowing American employers to focus on hiring immigrants based on their merit, not their birthplace".

The act will have to be passed through the House of Representatives and the Senate and then signed by the President of the United States for it to become a law.

Here is all you need to know about the EAGLE Act:

What does EAGLE Act say

The bipartisan act seeks to remove the seven percent cap for each country for employment-based immigrant visas. The per-country limit on family-sponsored visas will also be raised from seven percent to 15 percent under this act. The act aims for the limitations to be removed in a phased manner over the next nine years.

The seven percent per-country limit leads to countries with large populations getting the short-end of the stick as they would have the same number of visas allotted as countries with smaller populations.

"A person from a large-population country with extraordinary qualifications who could contribute greatly to our economy and create jobs waits behind a person with lesser qualifications from a smaller country," the statement from Curtis and Lofgren read. The statement added that the act seeks to 'de-emphasize birthplace'.

How will it help Indians job seekers

A large proportion of employment-based visa backlogs comprises Indians.

A report from think-tank Cato Institute stated, "Backlogged Indian workers face an impossible wait of nine decades if they all could remain in the line. More than 200,000 petitions filed for Indians could expire as a result of the workers dying of old age before they receive green cards."

The act, however, won't allow domination by Chinese and Indian visa applicants. The EAGLE Act would put in reserve visas for a period of nine years for 'Lower Admission States'.

It will be ensured that "no country may receive more than 25 percent of reserved visa and 85 percent of unreserved visas" in the nine fiscal years.