



## **H1b Visa: Donald Trump's H-1B move will hit US companies**

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US president Donald Trump's decision to suspend H-1B visas will hurt many of the biggest American companies. Google, Amazon, Apple, Facebook and IBM were among the top ten recipients of fresh H-1B visas in the 2019 fiscal, according to data from US Citizenship & Immigration Services.

"Trump's proclamation will hurt the US economy and destroy jobs," said Alex Nowrasteh, director of immigration studies at the Cato Institute's Centre for Global Liberty and Prosperity. "His cancellation of visas will reduce scientific research in the US. The ban will also make firms think twice about locating to the US. Congress cut corporate taxes in 2017 to attract firms to the US, but they won't come if they can't hire the workers they demand," he said.

BSA Software Alliance, which counts Microsoft, IBM and Intel among its members, also said the move would harm the US economy. It said access to foreign talent, adding to the expertise provided by American workers, is critical for the recovery and growth of all sectors of the US economy, including the software industry which supports 14.4 million jobs and contributes \$1.6 trillion in total value-added GDP annually. The software industry employs highly-skilled foreign workers, including those on H-1B, to recruit for select positions that are critical for their businesses.

"Filling these roles that are more abundant than the number of US employees qualified to fill them, means these jobs can be kept in the US. This allows companies based in the US to remain globally competitive, which in turn boosts the US economy, creating jobs for millions of Americans," it said.

Todd Schulte, president of FWD.us, an advocacy group initiated by Mark Zuckerberg, noted that three years ago, when unemployment was at 4%, Trump proposed the RAISE Act, which attempted to slash legal immigration by more than 50%. "Today, with unemployment at more than 13%, the president is enacting the same cuts through executive order. Both times they—against all actual evidence—claimed they were necessary for economic growth and to help native-born Americans," he said.

Scott Fitzgerald, partner in immigration firm Fragomen, said the move would cause additional hardship for US employers. But he said he is much more concerned about the proposed regulatory action around H-1B. The Trump administration has indicated that H-1Bs may be offered to those paying the highest salaries, a move away from the current lottery system.