



Green Card activists launch postcard campaign targeting Rep. Zoe Lofgren

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For those who live and work in the United States on a non-immigrant work visa, applying for a green card is the only way to become a permanent resident. However, for a majority of Indian H-1B visa holders, the road to permanent residency is very challenging.

According to the Washington think tank Cato Institute, Indian employer-sponsored petitioners face an eight-decade wait for green cards, and nearly 200,000 might die before they could even theoretically reach the front of the line.

In July 2019, the US House of Representatives had passed the “Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act,” or H.R. 1044, which would remove the country cap for green cards. Last December, the US Senate passed the companion bill, S. 386, giving a ray of hope for Indian nationals stuck in green card limbo.

However, since the two bills differed substantially, they had to be reconciled and passed again by both chambers for it to become law. That never happened as the term of 116th Congress ended in January.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-CA, the sponsor of the H.R. 1044, was hopeful of reintroducing the bill in the current session. Bills passed by the House and the Senate previously are routinely reintroduced.

But those who are stuck in the green card limbo are concerned if the bill will be introduced in the current Congress.

Urging to reintroduce the bill, they have been writing in, or tweeting to Lofgren, underlining the dire predicament many are facing. Recently they started a campaign to send a postcard to the California Democrat to include H.R. 1044 in the next session.

To ensure that the issue is not lost, many believe that sending a physical postcard to the politicians’ office can be the best and most effective way to highlight how it is affecting many of those working in America. Some H-1B and H-4 holders are also planning to tell their stories and the hardships they are facing.

The activists are cautiously optimistic about the reintroduction of the bill, as Lofgren had released a press statement in December 2020, clearly stressing the need for passing the bill.

The release read, “I have been working for more than 12 years to end the per-country limits. There is simply no reason that the 25 countries of Europe, with a total population of 200 million, should be allocated three times more green cards than the seven countries in the Indian

subcontinent, with roughly 1.7 billion inhabitants. Allocating green cards by country of birth is a relic of the past that never made any sense, and it makes even less sense in the modern business world. Members of Congress must work together to get this right.”

“It shows how much real effort Rep. Zoe Lofgren has made to make this bill into a law,” said California-based immigration consultant Netra Chavan. “A postcard campaign is started with only one goal in mind. We all are working together to capture the attention of Rep Zoe Lofgren who is author of H.R. 1044, the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act and ongoing bipartisan bill which has not yet been able to reach a compromise level between the House and Senate.”