



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1417-2020, **Version:** A

Res. No. 1417-A

Resolution calling on the United States Department of Homeland Security to place a moratorium on all removal proceedings for employment-based status holders that suffered a loss of employment during or due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Council Members Eugene, Kallos, Chin, Rosenthal, Ayala and Louis

Whereas, SARS-CoV-2 is the virus responsible for causing the new infectious disease known as COVID-19; and

Whereas, The first cases of humans infected with COVID-19 were identified in December 2019; by mid-February 2021, there were more than 112 million cases reported across the world and more than two million deaths linked to the disease; and

Whereas, In New York City, there were more than 700,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and more than 28,000 confirmed deaths from the disease by February 2021; and

Whereas, In order to help slow the spread of the virus, New York Governor Cuomo signed the New York State on PAUSE executive order that, amongst other things, closed all non-essential businesses effective March 22, 2020; and

Whereas, The Center for New York City Affairs assessed the devastating economic impact of the pandemic, finding that New York City lost 750,000 private sector and independent contractor jobs between February and December 2020, and as of January 2021, more than 1.3 million New Yorkers were receiving unemployment benefits; and

Whereas, Foreign-born New Yorkers are particularly vulnerable to job loss during the pandemic: while 49 percent of all private sector jobs were held by foreign-born workers, foreign-born workers account for 54

percent of those who lost jobs; and

Whereas, In 2019, prior to the pandemic, the U.S. issued 8.7 million non-immigrant visas, which include employment-based visas; and

Whereas, Employment-based visas are issued under specific criteria including listing the employer, and require recipients to re-apply should circumstances warrant any changes of employment; and

Whereas, Washington D.C.-based think tank, Niskanen Center, estimated that as many as 250,000 foreign-born workers on temporary visas seeking green cards could have fallen out of lawful status by June 2020; and

Whereas, With widespread layoffs and staff furloughs, hundreds of thousands of foreign-born individuals who were formerly active members of the U.S. workforce, could find themselves losing lawful work authorization and resident status; and

Whereas, The former Trump Administration issued two different actions to limit access to employment-based visas during the pandemic, through Presidential Proclamations on April 22, 2020 and on June 22, 2020; and

Whereas, These actions have been met by harsh criticism from multiple sectors, including the technological industry, and have already led to the separation of families, including at least 1,000 Indian nonimmigrant work-related based visas; and

Whereas, The foreign-born workforce is critical to the economic recovery in the U.S. broadly, but especially in the New York City, where 65.5 percent of the City's foreign-born residents participate in the labor force; and

Whereas, It is imperative that a moratorium on removal proceedings be put into effect for individuals who retained lawful status tied to their employer up until the start of COVID-19 pandemic; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on United States Department of Homeland Security to place a moratorium on all removal proceedings for employment-based status holders that suffered a

loss of employment during or due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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