

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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2018 MAR 16 AM 11:59

March 5, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

We write to request that you reconsider the Department of Homeland Security's proposal to revoke eligibility for employment authorization to certain H-4 dependent spouses of H-1B workers under 1615-AC15, *Removing H-4 Dependent Spouses from the Class of Aliens Eligible for Employment Authorization*. Revoking this eligibility, which was granted under the "H-4 rule" in 2015, will create significant uncertainty and financial hardship for many highly skilled professionals who are vital to our economy, and we believe it is critical that this program is kept in place.

As Representatives of California, we're proud of our state's leadership in innovation and success, not only in the various industries that fuel our economy but also in institutions of higher learning. Over 10 million Californians are foreign born, and without them we would not have companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, and Qualcomm which have made California's economy the 6<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. Over 880,000 immigrants own businesses in California, and together those immigrant-owned businesses have contributed over \$21 billion to our state's economy and created more jobs than such businesses in any other state. However, until 2015, the spouses of many highly skilled H-1B visa holders were left out, unable to contribute financially to their family or pursue their own professional goals because they did not have permission to work.

It can take decades for these immigrants and their families to receive green cards and the Department of Homeland Security extended eligibility for employment authorization to certain H-4 dependent spouses because it recognized the economic hardship facing the families of many H1-B workers who needed dual incomes to survive in high-cost areas. In many areas where these high-tech professionals live, such as Silicon Valley, it is nearly impossible for a family to live on one income.

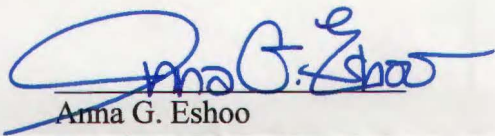
Since the H-4 rule was implemented three years ago for spouses of highly skilled immigrants, over 100,000 workers, mainly women, were finally granted permission to work and contribute to their households and our economy. The H-4 rule lessened the burden on thousands of H1-B recipients and their families while they transition from non-immigrants to lawful permanent residents by allowing their families to earn dual incomes. Many entrepreneurs used their EADs to start businesses that now employ U.S. citizens. Eliminating this benefit removes an important incentive for highly skilled immigrants to remain here to invest in and grow our economy to the benefit of all Americans.



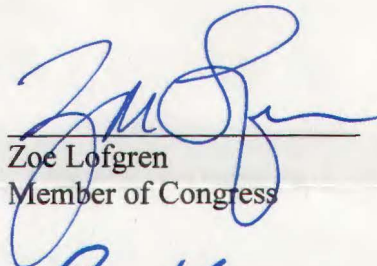
The H-4 rule is a matter of both economic competitiveness and maintaining family unity. The United States has already invested in these workers with years of expertise and we should not be sending them abroad to innovate and use their experience and talents against U.S. businesses. We ask that you reconsider the revocation of the H-4 rule and thank you in advance for your attention to our request.

We look forward to your timely response.

Most gratefully,



Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



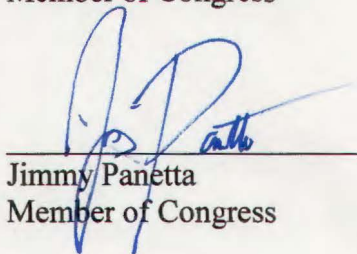
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



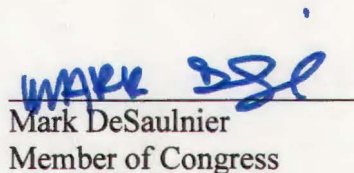
Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



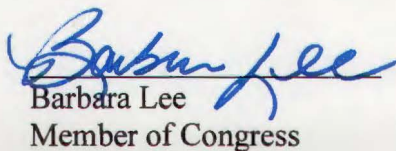
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



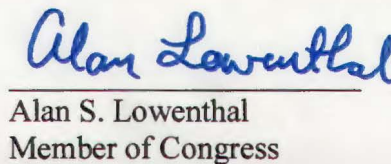
Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



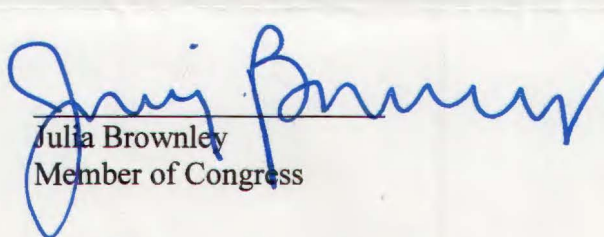
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



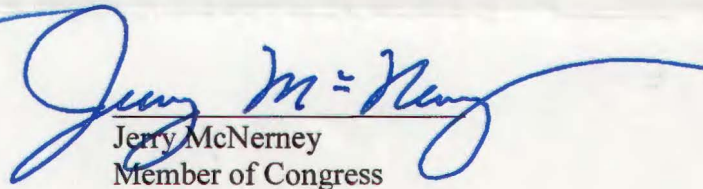
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



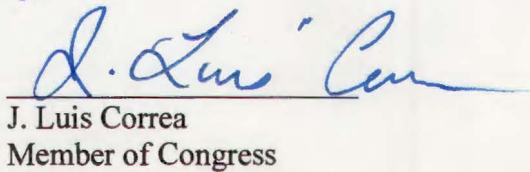
Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



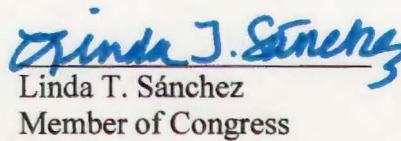
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



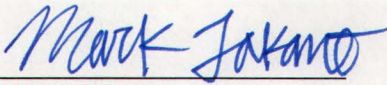
Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress



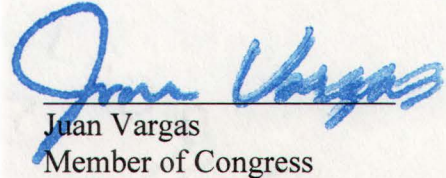
J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress



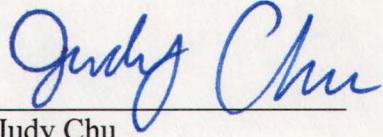
Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Eshoo:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to growing the U.S. economy and creating jobs for U.S. workers. In fact, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13788, DHS is required to “propose new rules and issue new guidance, to supersede or revise previous rules and guidance if appropriate, to protect the interests of U.S. workers in the administration of our immigration system, including through the prevention of fraud or abuse.” See E.O. 13788, Buy American and Hire American, 82 Fed. Reg. 18,837 (April 18, 2017). The public will be given an opportunity to provide feedback during a notice and comment period on any revisions to regulations that DHS determines appropriate, including revisions relating to the rule providing employment authorization to certain H-4 nonimmigrants.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The co-signers of your letter will receive separate, identical responses. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Francis Cissna".

L. Francis Cissna  
Director





**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lofgren:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to growing the U.S. economy and creating jobs for U.S. workers. In fact, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13788, DHS is required to “propose new rules and issue new guidance, to supersede or revise previous rules and guidance if appropriate, to protect the interests of U.S. workers in the administration of our immigration system, including through the prevention of fraud or abuse.” See E.O. 13788, Buy American and Hire American, 82 Fed. Reg. 18,837 (April 18, 2017). The public will be given an opportunity to provide feedback during a notice and comment period on any revisions to regulations that DHS determines appropriate, including revisions relating to the rule providing employment authorization to certain H-4 nonimmigrants.

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Respectfully,

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Panetta:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Ro Khanna  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Khanna:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director





**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Doris Matsui  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Matsui:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to growing the U.S. economy and creating jobs for U.S. workers. In fact, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13788, DHS is required to “propose new rules and issue new guidance, to supersede or revise previous rules and guidance if appropriate, to protect the interests of U.S. workers in the administration of our immigration system, including through the prevention of fraud or abuse.” See E.O. 13788, Buy American and Hire American, 82 Fed. Reg. 18,837 (April 18, 2017). The public will be given an opportunity to provide feedback during a notice and comment period on any revisions to regulations that DHS determines appropriate, including revisions relating to the rule providing employment authorization to certain H-4 nonimmigrants.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director





U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Barbara Lee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lee:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to growing the U.S. economy and creating jobs for U.S. workers. In fact, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13788, DHS is required to “propose new rules and issue new guidance, to supersede or revise previous rules and guidance if appropriate, to protect the interests of U.S. workers in the administration of our immigration system, including through the prevention of fraud or abuse.” See E.O. 13788, Buy American and Hire American, 82 Fed. Reg. 18,837 (April 18, 2017). The public will be given an opportunity to provide feedback during a notice and comment period on any revisions to regulations that DHS determines appropriate, including revisions relating to the rule providing employment authorization to certain H-4 nonimmigrants.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Alan S. Lowenthal  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lowenthal:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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Director



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DeSaulnier:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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Director





U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Julia Brownley  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Brownley:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Mark Takano  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Takano:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Linda T. Sánchez  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Sánchez:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director





U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable J. Luis Correa  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Correa:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Jerry NcNerney  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative NcNerney:

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Juan Vargas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Vargas:

Thank you for your March 5, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

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L. Francis Cissna  
Director





**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Judy Chu  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Chu:

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