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Congress of the United States
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February 1, 2024

Brandon Fauquet
Acting Chief
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear Brandon,

I am writing you today to discuss an urgent matter concerning members of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) Hindu organization. **The current visa backlogs at USCIS are severely impacting BAPS' clergy and religious workers.** BAPS has been a pillar of spiritual, charitable, and cultural strength in our community for a very long time.

During a recent meeting with [REDACTED] from the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Robbinsville, New Jersey—the largest Hindu temple outside of India—I gained firsthand insight into the critical challenges faced by their community due to the loss of clergy. This conversation highlighted the pressing need for action.

I strongly urge USCIS to consider extending Deferred Action to I-360 beneficiaries with retrogressed priority dates, allowing them to remain and work in the U.S. until the EB-4 priority date is current. This has been done for Special Immigrant Juvenile EB-4s, setting a precedent for such action.

Additionally, the processing of all outstanding I-360 petitions is crucial. These backlogs not only hinder their crucial community work, but also restrict their ability to practice their faith. It is difficult to overstate the harm done to BAPS clergy and other religious workers that have already been forced to leave without replacement.

I understand the challenges that USCIS faces, but I am deeply invested in finding a solution. The work and religious practices of BAPS are integral to our community, and it is our duty to support their continued presence and contributions. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this important issue. **I can be reached by cell at 202.320.4933 or via email at eagle@petesessions.com.**

Sincerely,

Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Pete Sessions
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Sessions:

Thank you for your February 1, 2024 letter to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding Extension of Deferred Action to I-360 Beneficiaries.

USCIS is keenly aware that demand greatly exceeds the limited supply of available immigrant visas in most family-sponsored and employment-based preference categories, including in the EB-4 category, and that such demand has steadily increased over the years. Many noncitizens seeking visas in the family-sponsored and employment-based categories have faced significant and increasingly long waits due to limited immigrant visa availability established by statute.

Thank you for your suggestion of exercising prosecutorial discretion to defer the removal of beneficiaries of Form I-360 religious worker petitions awaiting visa availability. USCIS will take your recommendation under advisement while we continue to consider a variety of policy and regulatory options that may help ease some of the challenges faced by noncitizens with lengthy wait times for available EB-4 visas, including religious workers present in the United States in nonimmigrant R-1 status. However, only legislation can fully address the imbalance between the limited supply of immigrant visas and the increasing demand for those visas.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ur M. Jaddou".

Ur M. Jaddou
Director