

Testimony Of Maz Rostamian

Founding Member - Director of Outreach

All Of Us

Supallofus.Org

FOR THE HEARING ON

**“Why Don’t They Just Get in Line?
Barriers to Legal Immigration”**

PRESENTED TO THE

**Subcommittee on Immigration and
Citizenship**

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
OF THE**

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT

April 28, 2021

My name is Maz Rostamian. I am a founding member and the director of outreach of All of Us, a grassroots organization with roughly 5,000 members who hope and expect that because of our skills, we will get green cards to live as legal permanent residents in the United States – and eventually, to become citizens of the greatest country in the world.

Our members are from more than 60 countries: Armenia, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Belarus, Canada, China, Columbia, Croatia, Cyprus, Philippines, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Iran, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Taiwan, and others.

We study at MIT, Stanford, Rensselaer, University of Texas at Austin, Penn State, Cornell, University of Notre Dame, Carnegie Mellon, Clemson, Indiana University, Pitt, Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins, Brandeis, Virginia Tech, Duke, LSU, the University of Illinois, West Virginia University and many others.

Our professional fields include medical and scientific research (chemistry, computer science, physics, neurology, climate change, marketing science, and artificial intelligence, among others).

Yet we face an obstacle that only the Congress can clear: there are not enough green cards.

I am typical of All of Us membership – I have a Ph.D. in engineering. Virtually all of our members are scientific and medical researchers, as you see from the attached document.

Our work saves lives and creates jobs.

All of Us supports the US Citizenship Act of 2021, introduced in the House by Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, and in the Senate by Senator Robert Menendez, and proposed by President Biden.

This bill has many parts reforming the entire broken immigration. No matter what, we urge that you move forward the provisions that increase green cards to eliminate backlogs and deliver to the current demand.

We ask this Committee to be very clear: the backlog for employment-based green cards is a not enough problem. So the answer is equally clear: we need more green cards.

As CRS has documented, the mostly Indian H-1Bs who are stuck in the backlog have a legitimate grievance. No one should have to wait 10 years for an employment-based green card

It's just arithmetic: the only way to solve that is more green cards.

"This analysis projects that, by FY2030, the EB1 backlog would grow from an estimated 119,732 individuals to an estimated 268,246 individuals; the EB2 backlog, from 627,448 individuals to 1,471,360 individuals; and the EB3 backlog, from 168,317 individuals to 456,190 individuals. In sum, the total backlog for all three employment-based categories would increase from an estimated 915,497 individuals currently to an estimated 2,195,795 by FY2030." [Page 15]"

Zero sum can't even solve the problem for Indians in the backlog: of the 2.2 million CRS calculated who will be waiting in 2030, roughly 150,000 are people born in India who are already waiting today – who will still be waiting ten years from now.

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46291>

So the backlog itself will have more than doubled. What's now a 10 year wait for one source country will become a 17 year wait for all source countries. A system that now doesn't work for Indians (and some Chinese) won't work for anybody.

When your hair is on fire, don't reach for a hammer to put it out.

The Biden/Menendez/Sanchez bill solves the employment-based immigration backlog the only way it can be solved: with more green cards. It also repeals the so-called "per country cap", which of course is not a cap at all: people born in India have gotten as much as five times the ostensible "cap".

We urge this Committee to look down the road on what some call merit-based immigration issues. It is true that because of COVID, by the end of this fiscal year, roughly a quarter million family based green cards will have been reallocated to the employment-based categories. This has been a substantial relief to many in the backlog.

Yet like the Titanic approaching the iceberg, the signs must not be ignored: one professional society surveyed its foreign graduate students and found that nearly 90% might simply leave the US and never return, if they were burdened with the delays that now afflict those born in India, and some from China.

<https://www.aps.org/policy/analysis/upload/Building-America-STEM-workforce.pdf>

Critical health care professionals like nurses and doctors also urgently need a supply of green cards. Let's be blunt: without enough nurses and doctors in this pandemic, people will die.

Just consider the space program. Varmi Verma, chief engineer for robotic operations for the Perseverance rover now exploring Mars told the Wall Street Journal: “She reels off a list of colleagues’ countries of origin: “Greece, Russia, India, Costa Rica, Cambodia, Mexico”—she pauses, then continues—“Argentina, France, Italy, the U.K., Colombia. It’s almost every place I can think of.”

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-american-dream-is-alive-on-mars-11614370446>

All of those professionals who seek green cards would be indefinitely cut off by zero sum legislation.

Surely this Committee doesn’t want to indefinitely exclude virtually all professions – except IT – and 190+ source countries from employment-based green cards, when MORE is the obvious solution. That would seriously damage higher education, the space program, and America’s technological lead in dozens of fields.

All of Us believes that America is not a zero sum nation. We do not believe that the only way for anyone to benefit is to make someone else suffer.

We urge this Committee to support the Biden/Menendez/Sanchez legislation to not only deliver green cards to everyone now in the employment-based backlog, but also to provide enough green cards so that, as CRS warned, we don’t double the backlog in the next ten years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment (sample letters from All of Us members)