

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to you today to strongly urge the administration to build upon the successful 2024 pilot program for domestic visa renewals and to take the necessary steps to formalize and expand this initiative this year with clear eligibility rules. As you know, the pilot program, which allowed certain eligible H-1B visa holders to renew their visas within the United States, was an important first step in modernizing our visa processing system. Given its success, we must ensure that this program not only continues but is expanded to include additional E, H, I, L, O, or P visas, to ease unnecessary burdens on workers and businesses alike.

Up until 2004, the United States allowed E, H, I, L, O, and P visas holders to renew their visas domestically<sup>1</sup>. This practice was discontinued by the State Department<sup>2</sup> in response to the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002. While this change was not legislatively required by Congress, the 2002 law mandated stricter biometric screening for visa applicants. At the time, the State Department had more capacity to collect this information in embassies and consulates abroad than domestically. The 2024 pilot was limited to those individuals who had already had their biometrics captured overseas and whose biometrics can be reused. Given that this process does not jeopardize national security and has the potential to increase government efficiency, the State Department should make the pilot program permanent and expand it to other categories. In fact, this would align with the findings of the Secure Borders and Open Doors Advisory Committee, convened by President Bush, that recommended reinstating domestic renewals for low-risk visa categories in 2008<sup>3</sup>.

The current system, which requires most nonimmigrant visa holders to leave the country for renewals, disrupts lives, strains consular resources abroad, causes undue financial burdens on workers, and creates uncertainty for U.S. companies relying on these talented individuals. In some cases, workers are forced to wait months to secure an appointment at an overseas embassy. Wait times ballooned during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>4</sup> and have yet to come back down to manageable levels. As of early 2025, wait times for visa processing remain alarmingly high, with

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<sup>1</sup> [22 CFR 41.111\(b\)\(3\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Department of State Public Notice 4747, “Discontinuation of Reissuance of Certain Nonimmigrant Visas in the United States”. Federal Register Vol. 69 No. 120, published June 23, 2004. Accessed online: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2004-06-23/pdf/04-14245.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> “Secure Borders and Open Doors”, Report of the Secure Borders and Open Doors Advisory Committee • January 2008, Department of Homeland Security [hsac\\_SBODACreport508-compliant\\_version2.pdf](#)

<sup>4</sup> “U.S. Vows to Tackle Visa Delays as Frustrations Mount”, November 17, 2022, Wall Street Journal. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-vows-to-tackle-visa-delays-as-frustrations-mount-11668718834>

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student and temporary worker wait times surpassing more than 300 days in some cases<sup>5</sup>. These delays not only hinder economic growth but also weaken America's ability to attract and retain top talent.

By reinstating and expanding domestic visa renewals, this backlog can be alleviated, increasing efficiency and providing greater certainty for U.S. employers, workers, and students. Additionally, such a move aligns with broader efforts to modernize the immigration system and reduce unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles that hinder innovation and economic competitiveness. Finally, permitting visa renewals domestically will ensure timely additional vetting of individuals who are currently in the United States, much sooner than would occur if they had to wait until the next time they needed to travel overseas.

We strongly encourage the administration to dedicate the necessary resources for domestic visa renewals and are prepared to support congressionally directed spending to ensure that domestic visa renewals become a permanent fixture of our immigration system. By doing so, we can support our workforce, increase our global competitiveness, improve our national security, reduce burdens on our consular posts abroad, and uphold America's position as a global leader in attracting the best and brightest talent.

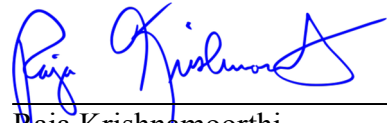
Sincerely,



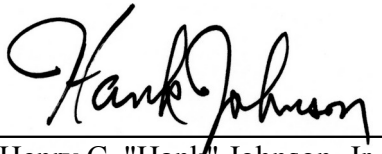
Suhas Subramanyam  
Member of Congress



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA  
Member of Congress



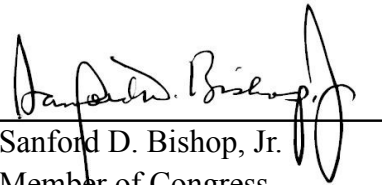
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
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Don Bacon  
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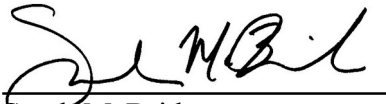


Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

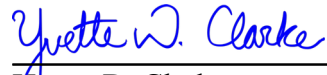
<sup>5</sup> Global Visa Wait Times, State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs website.  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/global-visa-wait-times-DEACTIVATED.html>

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Yvette D. Clarke  
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Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



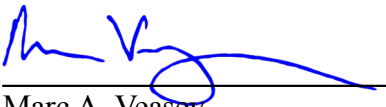
Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



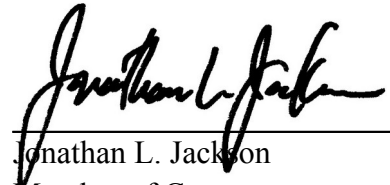
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