

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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 6th 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.

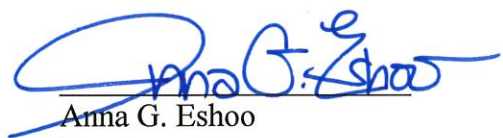
It can take decades for these immigrants and their families to receive green cards and the Department of Homeland Security extended eligibility for employment authorization to certain H-4 dependent spouses because it recognized the economic hardship facing the families of many H-1-B workers who needed 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 H-1-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



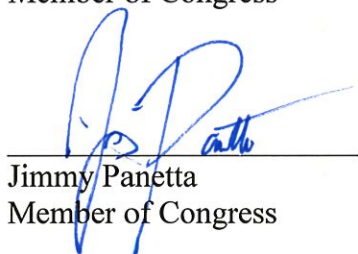
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



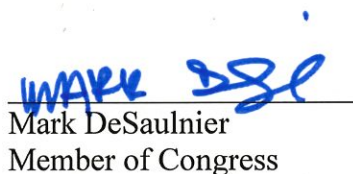
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



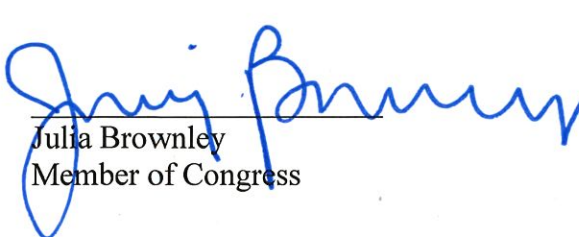
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



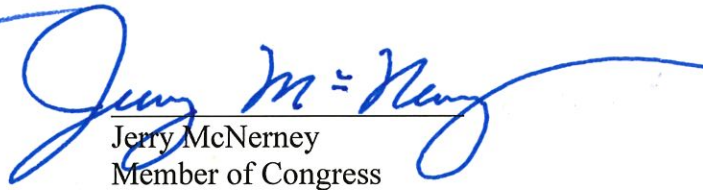
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



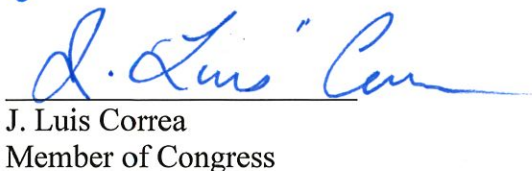
Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



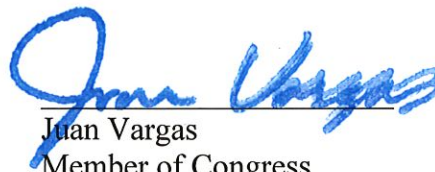
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress