

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.698
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2018

H1B VISA CURBS BY USA

698. SHRI B. SENGUTTUVAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Trump Administration has put on hold its policy under which it proposed to impose curbs and restrictions on the entry of skilled foreign professionals and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the implementation of such a curb would result in the self-deportation of 5,00,000 to 7,50,000 qualified Indian Diaspora and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether such a move would also hurt the US business interests as there is huge dearth of skilled professional among the local population and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government has taken up this issue of self-deportation of huge Indian population once the H1B Visa curbs are introduced with the US authorities and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (d) There are proposals under consideration in the U.S. to reform the H-1B and L-1 visa programmes. However, so far, no comprehensive changes have been made.

In the current (115th) Congress, seven Bills relating to H-1B and L-1 Visa programmes have been introduced by individual Congressmen and Senators. However, so far, none of these Bills have been passed.

On the Executive side, on April 18, 2017, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) titled "Buy American and Hire American", which requires different arms of the U.S. Administration to suggest reforms to the H-1B visa programme. This process is still underway. The US Administration has also taken some steps towards stricter enforcement and prevention of abuse of the work visa programmes.

The Government had seen the media reports that suggested that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was contemplating ending the provision of granting extensions to H-1B visa holders whose applications for permanent residency (Green Card) were pending. The Government had taken up this issue with the U.S. Administration at various levels and apprised them of our concerns over these reports.

In a statement issued to the media on 08 January 2018, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has clarified that it is not considering any regulatory change that would discontinue the existing practice of granting extensions to H-1B visa holders with pending green card applications.

Government of India remains closely engaged with the U.S. Administration and the Congress on all issues relating to movement of Indian professionals including under the H-1B visa programme. In our engagements, we have emphasized that this has been a mutually-beneficial partnership which should be nurtured. Indian skilled professional have contributed to the growth and development of the U.S. economy and have helped the U.S. retain its competitive edge and innovation advantage. They are a big stakeholder in India-U.S. relations and their backward linkages to India have helped U.S. businesses.
