

Trump issues proclamation to deny immigration visas to workers lacking health insurance

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Last Friday, the White House released a presidential proclamation suspending immigration visas for applicants “who will financially burden the United States health care system,” unless they can show that within 30 days of entry into the US they will be covered by an “approved” health insurance plan, or they have the “financial resources to pay for reasonably foreseeable medical costs.”

The executive action is the latest attack on lawful immigration, erecting new barriers for those who seek to emigrate to the US pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act, which allows employment-based, family-based and student immigration, along with other specific forms of immigration.

The proclamation takes effect on November 3. Although the Department of Homeland Security is generally responsible for the implementation and enforcement of immigration laws and regulations, the proclamation grants the secretary of state the authority to set standards and procedures to implement the restriction. At this point, it is unclear how the proclamation will be implemented for those filing visa petitions after November 3.

While many media outlets claim the restriction will predominantly impact those applying for family-based visas, it will, in fact, affect all types of legal immigration to the United States, further restructuring the immigration system on an explicitly class basis. The system will increasingly favor the wealthy and highly educated and deter working class applicants.

In a country where the health care industry squeezes every penny it can from the working class, the proclamation claims the restriction to be necessary to save the health care system from “challenges caused by

uncompensated care,” which the Trump administration claims is “detrimental to the interests of the United States.”

The new order is in line with the administration’s efforts to whip up anti-immigrant sentiment by casting foreign-born workers as the enemies of American workers, whom Trump is supposedly protecting by preventing outsiders from leeching on the available pool of health coverage. This contention is a preposterous lie, coming from an administration that is cutting billions in government health care spending, moving to privatize Medicare and slashing the taxes of the insurance and pharmaceutical giants that take in billions by price gouging and rationing health care services for workers and poor people.

In addition to this latest White House order limiting lawful immigration, Trump’s hand-picked anti-immigrant leaders of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, which adjudicates visa petitions, have expanded impositions on legal immigration begun under the Obama administration. USCIS has changed its interpretation of regulations on visa petitions to arbitrarily and illegally deny applications.

In August, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published its final rule on inadmissibility on “public charge” grounds, shutting the door on those who cannot prove that they can “care for themselves” during their entire length of their stay in the US.

In September, DHS published a proposed rule that will require visa applicants to provide the department with social media handles from virtually all popular social media platforms, so that the department can “establish screening and vetting standards and procedures... to assess an alien’s eligibility to travel to

or be admitted to the United States or to receive an immigration-related benefit.”

This rule will be used to summarily deny a visa application to anyone who refuses to fully disclose his or her “publicly available social media information,” or maintains a social media account with posts that express opposition to the US government and its policies.

Recently, a city attorney in Southaven, Mississippi, submitted a motion to dismiss a wrongful death suit filed by the widowed spouse of an immigrant murdered by the local police. The attorney argued that the grieving woman and her family did not have standing to file a civil suit against the city and that her deceased husband “was not one of the ‘We, the People of the United States’” referred to in the preamble of the US Constitution. The assertion is that the immigrant family, and by extension all immigrant families, are not entitled to the civil rights granted in the Constitution.



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