

Trump signs reactionary proclamation expanding immigration restrictions

Kevin Reed
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President Donald Trump issued a proclamation on Monday that both extends and expands restrictions imposed on foreign workers by the administration last April that were set to expire after 60 days.

Falsely claiming that the measures will protect American workers from job losses stemming from the coronavirus pandemic, the xenophobic order bans many categories of foreign workers and curtails immigration visas through the end of 2020. Trump excluded some categories of workers entering the US for jobs such as agricultural laborers, health care workers involved in pandemic response, food service workers and some other temporary workers.

Among the new sectors that have been added to the visa ban already in place are the technology, landscaping and forestry industries. The new rules would stop the issuing of H-1B visas to foreign faculty members hired at universities, for example. The order also extends the restrictions on issuing new green cards.

The changes will go into effect on June 24 and only impact those filling out new applications, not anyone who is already in the country or others with papers validating their entry into the US. Some exemptions will be permitted, such as foreign workers on J-1 academic visas who are most often postdoctoral researchers. Consular officials abroad will have the means to make their own exceptions.

Others impacted by the executive proclamation are global corporations that will be prevented from moving executives and other staff between other locations and the US and spouses of foreign workers who are currently employed in the US.

Exposing the fraud of claims that the measures are aimed at providing jobs for workers made unemployed by the pandemic, the rules contain a loophole, according the *Washington Post*, which allows “roughly

20,000 people who come to the United States annually as ‘au pairs’ to provide child care for U.S. families” who are wealthy enough to afford such services.

Additionally, with tens of millions of workers currently without jobs in the US, the number of positions that will not be filled due to Trump’s order is expected to be approximately 525,000.

With characteristic cynicism, Trump said of the measures, “We have a moral duty to create an immigration system that protects the lives and jobs of our citizens.” Of course, the reality is that for the capitalist ruling establishment, the lives and jobs of workers are expendable both by sending them back to work under deadly conditions in the midst of the pandemic and by using the economic downturn brought on by the coronavirus to permanently eliminate jobs.

The proclamation restricting immigration was slammed by economic and technology experts who argue that foreign talent is necessary to keep the US scientific community on the leading edge globally.

It is significant that Trump’s anti-immigration policies have taken priority in the White House over the concerns of major corporate and industry representatives. Thomas J. Donohue, the chief executive of the US Chamber of Commerce, responded, “Putting up a ‘not welcome’ sign for engineers, executives, IT experts, doctors, nurses and other workers won’t help our country, it will hold us back.”

Lizbet Borroughs, associate vice-president for federal relations at the Association of American Universities in Washington, DC, whose members include leading US research institutions, told *Nature*, “We find it extremely concerning, particularly as medical residents are brought in on H-1B visas, and faculty who are necessary to educate the US workforce.

“The bottom line is that suspending processing for

H-1B visas is going to have an impact on American research and American innovation and America's ability to train and teach its scientific workforce pipeline," Boroughs said.

Others have pointed to the fact that Trump is exploiting the coronavirus pandemic and economic crisis as a means to implement border and immigration policies that have been on the desk of the fascistic White House advisor Stephen Miller for some time. Long before the COVID-19 crisis, Miller had for years urged the elimination of foreign worker visas.

On April 22, Trump issued what was called at the time an immigration "freeze," an executive order that restricted limited categories of immigrants from entering the US for 60 days. The administration paused permanent-residency permits, or green cards, to people outside the United States, although it exempted medical workers, on the grounds that it would protect the nation from COVID-19.

In the intervening 60 days, the US has emerged as the global epicenter of the pandemic and stopping the spread of the virus by closing the borders is no longer a legitimate justification for the attack on foreign workers, so the Trump administration has shifted to the equally bogus claim of "protecting jobs."

On Tuesday, Trump took his anti-immigrant program on the road to a presidential campaign rally of immigration officials and Republican Party allies in Yuma, Arizona, where he boasted about the border wall currently under construction, stating, "My administration has done more than any administration in history to secure our southern border. It's the most powerful and comprehensive border wall structure anywhere in the world."

Trump is stepping up his war on immigrants in an effort to rally his right-wing base and boost falling poll numbers due to broad public disgust over the administration's back-to-work response to the ongoing pandemic, even as more than 120,000 have now officially died from the disease, as well as the steady attacks on the protesters across the country who have taken to the streets for nearly a month demanding an end to police violence.

The Democratic Party maintained their silence on Trump's proclamation on Monday—including the presumptive party nominee for president, former Vice President Joe Biden—expressing their essential

agreement with the White House immigration policy. As Henry Olsen of the *Washington Post* analyzed, "If Biden chooses to placate his voter and donor bases, he runs the risk of giving Trump an appealing issue that plays right into the typical Trump playbook. Trump has faltered a lot in recent months, but he knows how to attack someone for being weak on immigration."

The working class must oppose the nationalism of the Trump administration and its reactionary immigration restrictions which are designed to pit American workers against their brothers and sisters around the world in the struggle for employment. All workers, regardless of where they were born, have the right to live and work where they please free from threat of deportation and with full citizenship rights.

The development of the global economy, including its advanced technical infrastructure, and the movement of workers from one corner of the world to the other must take place without the impediment of national boundaries and immigration restrictions. This requires a unified revolutionary struggle by the international working class for open borders and the building of a socialist society on a world scale.



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