### Base DA Link — High-Skilled Immigration

#### Trump’s base overwhelmingly opposes high-skilled immigration.

Konitzer et al. 16 — Tobias Konitzer, Ph.D. Candidate in Communication at Stanford University, et al., with Sam Corbett-Davies, Ph.D. Candidate in Computer Science at Stanford University, and David Rothschild, Economist at Microsoft Research, 2016 (“Trump voters support blocking immigration, but not that into deportation,” *Predict Wise*, December, Available Online at <https://blog.predictwise.com/2016/12/trump-voters-support-blocking-immigration-but-not-that-into-deportation/>, Accessed 11-14-2018)

There is surprising hostility to new immigration: 83 percent of Trump voters support blocking the immigration of Muslims and 58 percent oppose increasing the flow of high skilled immigrants. The 83 percent is startling high, due to the obvious legal and logistical problems with blocking immigration by religion, beyond any larger impact of religious-based legislation. The lack of interest in high skilled immigration, puts the Trump supports at odds with much of the business community wing of the Republican Party.

#### Trump wants to substantially decrease high-skilled immigration *even though* he allegedly supports it.

Crunden 18 — E.A. Crunden, Reporter at *Think Progress*, 2018 (“Trump said he wanted highly skilled immigrants. Now he’s forcing them out.,” *Think Progress*, January 6th, Available Online at <https://thinkprogress.org/h1b-green-card-trump-crackdown/>, Accessed 11-14-2018)

President Trump’s administration is reportedly considering cracking down on visas for highly skilled workers, this time with potential repercussions for hundreds of thousands of recipients with pending green card applications.

According to sources who spoke with McClatchy reporters, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is considering new regulations ending extensions for H-1Bs — visas for skilled workers in a range of fields like technology, research, and education. Foreign students hoping to stay and work in research, advocacy, and the non-profit sector are also among those who rely on H-1Bs. The visa is typically offered for three years with the option of renewal up to six years.

Currently, some recipients with pending green card applications have the option of extending that time period, allowing them to work in the United States until their paperwork comes through. The vast majority are Indian workers, many employed by large technology companies. If the new regulations go into effect, they will be forced to leave.

“The idea is to create a sort of ‘self-deportation’ of hundreds of thousands of Indian tech workers in the United States to open up those jobs for Americans,” said one source briefed on the matter.

The Trump administration has taken a hardline approach to immigration thus far, cracking down on undocumented immigrants and calling for harsh punishments for so-called sanctuary cities. The president has also endorsed the Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy (RAISE) Act introduced by Republican Sens. Tom Cotton (AR) and David Perdue (GA) last August, which attempts to cut immigration to the United States in half — from approximately 1 million people to only 500,000 — through a reduction in the number of green cards issued. The RAISE Act also seeks to cap refugee numbers and do away with the diversity visa lottery, which Trump fiercely opposes.

The RAISE Act has since stalled in the Senate, but the White House hasn’t given up on curbing immigration, with the president now seemingly turning his sights back on H-1B visas.

In April, Trump fulfilled a campaign promise and signed the “Buy American, Hire American” executive order cracking down on the visa. At the time, Trump claimed the move was a win for blue-collar Americans out of jobs. But the realities of the visa, which provides one of the only feasible paths to documented immigration for many people in white-collar jobs, are much more complicated.

While undocumented immigrants face a far steeper battle to stay in the United States, immigrants struggling to find documented employer sponsorship like the kind required by the H-1B also face a great deal of paperwork, money, and waiting, often suffering mental health issues as a result.

Many immigrants working on H-1B visas also apply for green cards. For citizens from certain countries, however, per-country restrictions create a backlog. That means nationals from countries like India have to wait much longer for permanent residency — running out their H-1B visas in the meantime. The extension allows them to stay until their residency is established, something the Trump administration wants to end.

It’s unclear how many people would be impacted by the reported regulations. Indian media has speculated that between 500,000 and 700,000 immigrants could be forced to leave the United States, but the numbers themselves are hard to ascertain. That’s largely the fault of the government, Sarah Pierce, an associate policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, told ThinkProgress.

“In order to know how many people are impacted, it would be helpful if the government would just tell us,” she said. According to her own calculations, Pierce estimated any move to end the extensions could impact as many as 200,000 people.

Other estimates are substantially higher: Leon Fresco, an immigration attorney and partner with the law firm Holland & Knight, told ThinkProgress around 1 million people could be impacted, a figure that accounts for spouses and children.

Virtually all estimates point to at least 100,000 people being affected by the change.

That reality is weighing heavily on immigrants, many of whom have settled into regular lives and routines here in the United States.

“I’ve gotten hundreds of emails and calls, with people asking, ‘What should I do, what should I do?’ This information has really sparked fear in the community,” Fresco said. “People have bought houses and have children, thinking this is a logical path. Now they’re terrified.”

Whether the regulations go into effect or not, the irony of the White House’s crackdown on H-1B recipients isn’t lost on experts. Trump has said the United States needs more highly skilled immigrants and called for immigration reform that replaces “our low-skilled [immigration] system with a points-based system.” That’s left many analysts confused in light of the administration’s attacks on the very same immigrants Trump purportedly wants to keep.

“This administration definitely recognizes the value of high-skilled immigration. They’re always saying they want to change our system,” Pierce said. “The H-1B visa is just that. With a lot of these policies, they seem to be going after the exact immigrants they value. These immigrants contribute a lot to our economy and country. Some of the companies we value most require these workers. It’s wild to think this administration would go after that.”

#### Trump’s support for “merit-based immigration” doesn’t mean he supports the plan — it’s a code phrase for lowering immigration.

Anderson 18 — Stuart Anderson, Executive Director of the National Foundation for American Policy—a non-partisan public policy research organization focusing on trade, immigration, and related issues, former Executive Associate Commissioner for Policy and Planning and Counselor to the Commissioner at the Immigration and Naturalization Service, former Staff Member on the Senate Immigration Subcommittee, 2018 (“Right Now, 'Merit-Based' Just Means Fewer Immigrants,” *Forbes*, February 12th, Available Online at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2018/02/12/right-now-merit-based-just-means-fewer-immigrants/#20e0c8b88e84>, Accessed 11-14-2018)

When the Trump administration says it wants “merit-based immigration” it’s not talking about admitting 1 million scientists and engineers, or even any additional immigrants with college degrees. In fact, in the past year, the Trump administration has not taken a single action to make it easier for U.S. employers to hire or retain high-skilled foreign nationals. No, “merit-based” is a code phrase for reducing legal immigration by up to 50% and eliminating almost all family immigration categories and the Diversity Visa lottery.

#### Prefer our evidence — Trump’s actions speak louder than tweets.

Anderson 18 — Stuart Anderson, Executive Director of the National Foundation for American Policy—a non-partisan public policy research organization focusing on trade, immigration, and related issues, former Executive Associate Commissioner for Policy and Planning and Counselor to the Commissioner at the Immigration and Naturalization Service, former Staff Member on the Senate Immigration Subcommittee, 2018 (“Right Now, 'Merit-Based' Just Means Fewer Immigrants,” *Forbes*, February 12th, Available Online at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2018/02/12/right-now-merit-based-just-means-fewer-immigrants/#20e0c8b88e84>, Accessed 11-14-2018)

Trump administration officials and their policies have never been about bringing in more “high-skilled” immigrants based on “merit.” The best evidence is to examine their actions, which have been unfriendly toward both highly educated immigrants and their U.S. employers.