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Congress of the United States

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January 22, 2024

The Honorable Ur M. Jaddou
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear Director Jaddou,

I write to inquire about a matter concerning the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) Hindu organization. My understanding is that the current visa backlog at USCIS is severely impacting BAPS' clergy and religious workers and in turn, the organization's faith practice, charitable works, and community service.

In order to address this concern, I request USCIS' full and fair consideration for the extension of Deferred Action to I-360 Beneficiaries with retrogressed priority dates. This would allow affected BAPS clergy and religious workers to remain and work in the United States until the EB-4 priority date is current. It is my understanding that there is precedent for such action, as this has been done for Special Immigrant Juvenile EB-4 visas.

While I recognize that the agency faces unique challenges, I am committed to working with USCIS to find a solution to this concern and to ensure that BAPS may continue its' religious and community functions, which are integral to my community.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact Matthew Clarkin (matthew.clarkin@mail.house.gov) on my staff if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

February 16, 2024

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Fitzpatrick:

Thank you for your January 22, 2024 letter to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding clergy and religious workers of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) Hindu organization.

USCIS is keenly aware that demand greatly exceeds the limited supply of available immigrant visas in most family-sponsored and employment-based preference categories, including in the EB-4 category, and that such demand has steadily increased over the years. Many noncitizens seeking visas in the family-sponsored and employment-based categories have faced significant and increasingly long waits due to limited immigrant visa availability established by statute.

Thank you for your suggestion of exercising prosecutorial discretion to defer the removal of beneficiaries of Form I-360 religious worker petitions awaiting visa availability. USCIS will take your recommendation under advisement while we continue to consider a variety of policy and regulatory options that may help ease some of the challenges faced by noncitizens with lengthy wait times for available EB-4 visas, including religious workers present in the United States in nonimmigrant R-1 status. However, only legislation can fully address the imbalance between the limited supply of immigrant visas and the increasing demand for those visas.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director