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April 17th, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf  
Acting Secretary U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Nebraska Avenue Complex  
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20528

RE: Open Letter to Support Immigrants Facing Visa Uncertainty during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Secretary U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Wolf:

As a coalition of business leaders, we hear on a daily basis the pain, frustration and fear that our foreign-born employees and customers face given the uncertainty surrounding immigration in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our community of employees and customers are scared. They're scared about their health. They're scared about their livelihoods. They shouldn't be scared about whether they're still welcome in the United States. On their behalf, we ask for your help in easing this uncertainty.

We come together today to call for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to eliminate the uncertainty and burden by extending all deadlines and statuses for nonimmigrant visa holders lawfully present in the United States until 90 days after the state of emergency declared by the President has come to a close. The need for clarity and compassion from our government is critical because no one should put their health and safety at risk at a time when borders are largely closed and the ability to study or work has dramatically changed.

As the nation recognizes Ellis Island Day today and celebrates the contributions of immigrants, this call is more appropriate than ever to ensure that millions of immigrants living in the United States today can remain here and positively contribute to American society now and in the difficult recovery times ahead. Immigrants play a key role in American society and are essential to saving lives today and rehabilitating our economy tomorrow. Despite making up just 13% of the population, they are over-represented as small business owners, entrepreneurs, healthcare workers, and more. 16.5% of all healthcare workers in the United States are foreign-born. Moreover, new business is the main driver of the job growth in the U.S. and accounts for \$1.3T of annual sales. The contributions of immigrants are more important than ever.

We are in a national emergency. The focus of our individuals and institutions--public and private--should be on protecting the health and safety of our communities. By and large, state and federal governments have shown tremendous compassion, creativity, and resourcefulness



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during this crisis. We also recognize and applaud efforts USCIS and the Department of Homeland Security have taken to combat the COVID-19 crisis by suspending in-person services, providing guidance on emergency services and showing flexibility in requirements related to Form I-9 compliance. However, these measures simply do not do enough to resolve the disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused to standard immigration procedures. Today, we ask for a correction in the face of these extraordinary circumstances.

Our world and country face unprecedented challenges, and there is a simple, commonsense way to support the thousands of immigrants continuing to help us take on the difficult road ahead. With the country in many ways effectively at a standstill to combat the spread of COVID-19, affected immigrants, as well as the many of us ready to support their stay here, are torn between jeopardizing their lawful presence in our communities or risking their health to file documentation, engage in travel or find new employment. Extending immigration deadlines and statuses during a time of national emergency prevents very real physical, emotional and operational burdens on our businesses and communities which are already stretched far beyond normal circumstances.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Nova Credit  
225 Valencia St,  
San Francisco, CA 94103



Signatories:

Misha Esipov, Co-founder & CEO, and Nicky Goulimis, Co-founder & COO, Nova Credit  
Ash Gupta, Former CRO and President of Risk & Information Management & Banking Group, American Express  
Eileen Serra, Former CEO, Chase Cards; Board Director, Women's Refugee Commission; Board Director, Family Promise  
Jennifer Tescher, President & CEO, Financial Health Network  
Anil Arora, former CEO Yodlee and former Vice Chair of Envestnet  
Dan Quan, Former Senior Advisor to the Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau  
Jake Gibson, Founding Partner, Better Tomorrow Ventures and former COO & Co-founder, NerdWallet  
Sheel Mohnot, Founder, Better Tomorrow Ventures  
Kathryn Minshew, Co-founder & CEO, and Alexandra Cavoulacos, Co-founder & President, The Muse  
Ganesh Kumar, Former Global Head of Product Growth and Analytics, Amazon  
Krish Nagpal, Analytics Lead, Verizon  
Susan Ehrlich, CEO, Earnest  
Bill Trenchard, Partner, First Round Capital  
Julie Samuels, Executive Director, Tech:NYC  
Courtney Buie Lipkin, Partner, Susa Ventures  
Ennie Lim, CEO, and Max Zschoch, CPO, HoneyBee  
Tristan Louis, President and CEO, Casebook PBC  
Jimmy Chen, Founder & CEO, Propel  
Ethan Block, CEO, Digit  
Sam Hodges, Co-founder & CEO, Travis Hedge, Co-founder & VP BD, Vouch  
Tommy Nicholas, Co-founder & CEO, Laura Spiekerman, Co-founder & CRO, Alloy  
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Eugene Yi, Co-founder, Cortico  
Rahim Lakhani, CFO, LetGo  
Romish Badani, CEO, Bridge  
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Lindsay Ullman, CEO & Co-Founder, Umbrella  
Emmanuel Schalit, CEO, and Ciara Lakhani, Chief People Officer, Dashlane  
Thomson Nguyen, CEO, Hatch  
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Thomas Neckel, CEO, Cove

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Addie Lerner, Founder & Managing Partner, Avid Ventures

Farron Blanc, Co-Founder & CEO, Gerry



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

June 29, 2020

Mr. Misha Esipov  
Co-founder & CEO  
Nova Credit  
225 Valencia Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Esipov:

Thank you for your April 17, 2020 letter. In the letter, you express your support for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to extend flexibilities and adopt measures to assist applicants and petitioners during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Acting Secretary has asked that I respond on his behalf.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has no greater responsibility than ensuring the safety and security of our country. Responding to the pandemic requires everyone to work within rapidly changing, complex circumstances that create a variety of situations and conditions unique to individuals and communities. Our primary goal is to ensure the safety of the public and our employees as the situation evolves.

We recognize that there are immigration-related challenges that individuals, employers, and others face as a direct result of the national emergency. We carefully analyze these issues and leverage our resources to effectively address these challenges within our existing authorities. DHS continues to act to protect the American people and our communities and is considering a number of policies and procedures to improve the employment opportunities of U.S. workers during this pandemic.

It is important for us to emphasize that USCIS continues to accept and process requests for immigration benefits. Our workforce has continued to perform mission-essential duties and provide emergency services for certain situations. In addition, as we announced in our public-facing website, USCIS has extended flexibilities with regard to the timeframe for petitioners and applicants to respond to USCIS requests and notices. Our website and outreach efforts provide additional guidance, resources, and information to the public on the actions and policies we are implementing through these uncertain times.

Mr. Misha Esipov  
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DHS will continue to communicate publicly regarding any changes we make to ensure that the public is fully informed of the steps we are taking to address these and other challenges resulting from this national emergency.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph Edlow  
Deputy Director for Policy