

National Foundation for American Policy

March 1, 2019

Contact: Stuart Anderson, 703-351-5042, press@nfap.com

New Analysis Finds Large Increase in State Department Visa Refusals in FY 2018; “Extreme Vetting” and “Public Charge” Changes Having Major Impact

Arlington, Va. – A new [analysis](#) by the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP), an Arlington, Va.-based policy research group, finds implementing “extreme vetting” for visas and new “public charge” eligibility requirements is increasing the number of immigrants and applicants for temporary visas denied entry to the United States. The analysis is based on new [data](#) released by the U.S. Department of State.

The National Foundation for American Policy compared data for FY 2017 to FY 2018 and found ineligibility findings used by the State Department to refuse visa applicants increased 39% for immigrants and 5% for nonimmigrants (individuals seeking temporary visas) between FY 2017 and FY 2018.

The number of temporary visas issued declined 7% from FY 2017 to FY 2018, while the number of immigrant (permanent resident) visas declined 5%. Immigrant and temporary visas could continue to decline in FY 2019 and FY 2020 due to restrictive policies from the Trump administration.

Between FY 2016 and FY 2018 the number of temporary visas issued declined 1,353,465 or 13%.

The State Department data show a similar trend for immigrants seeking permanent residence, primarily family-based immigrants, since employment-based immigrants typically gain permanent residence (a green card) while adjusting from a temporary status (such as H-1B) inside the United States.

The number of immigrants issued visas declined from 559,536 in FY 2017 to 533,557 in FY 2018, a decline of 5%. Between FY 2016 and FY 2018 the number immigrants issued visas declined 14%.

The administration’s March 6, 2017, presidential memorandum on “[heightened screening and vetting of applications for visas](#)” and the [change in public charge standards](#) in the Foreign Affairs Manual are most responsible for the decline in visa issuance. The March 6, 2017, presidential memorandum stated, “I direct the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security . . . to rigorously enforce all existing grounds of inadmissibility and to ensure subsequent compliance with related laws after admission.” The Buy American and Hire American [executive order](#) also has played a role.

“Reducing the number of immigrants and temporary visa holders admitted to the United States has been an administration goal since Donald Trump became president,” said Stuart Anderson, executive director of the National Foundation for American Policy and counselor to the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) under President George W. Bush. “The data show current policies make it more difficult for companies to gain visas for employees and are keeping U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents separated from spouses, children and other family members.”

Table 1
Visas Issued to Immigrants and Temporary Visa Holders

	FY 2017	FY 2018	Decline FY 2017 to FY 2018
Temporary (Nonimmigrant) Visas Issued	9,681,913	9,028,026	-653,887 (-7%)
Immigrant Visas Issued	559,536	533,557	-25,979 (-5%)

Source: U.S. Department of State, National Foundation for American Policy.

Table 2
Visa Refusals (Ineligibility Findings) for Immigrants and Temporary Visas

	FY 2017	FY 2018	Increase FY 2017 to FY 2018
Total Number of Ineligibility Findings for Immigrants	332,003	460,840	128,837 (+39%)
Total Number of Ineligibility Findings for Temporary Visas (Nonimmigrants)	3,516,581	3,706,541	189,060 (+5%)

Source: U.S. Department of State, National Foundation for American Policy. Note: An applicant “may be found ineligible under more than one section of the Immigration and Nationality Act,” according to the State Department, which means the number of ineligibility findings may not match up with the number of applications within a single year.

Table 3
Visa Refusals (Ineligibility Findings) for Immigrants: FY 2017 to FY 2018

Grounds for Refusal	FY 2017	FY 2018	Increase FY 2017 to FY 2018
Public Charge (Immigrant), 212(a)(4)	3,237	13,450	10,213 (+316%)
Application Does Not Comply with INA (Immigrant), 221(g)	254,478	341,128	86,650 (+34%)
Misrepresentation (Immigrant), 212(a)(6)(C)(i)	5,862	8,078	2,216 (+38%)
Smugglers of Aliens (Immigrant), 212(a)(6)(E)	2,521	5,379	2,858 (+113%)

Source: U.S. Department of State, National Foundation for American Policy.

About the National Foundation for American Policy

Established in the Fall 2003, the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan public policy research organization based in Arlington, Virginia focusing on trade, immigration and related issues. The Advisory Board members include Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati, Ohio University economist Richard Vedder, Cornell Law School professor Stephen W. Yale-Loehr and former INS Commissioner James W. Ziglar. Over the past 24 months, NFAP's research has been written about in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other major media outlets. The organization's reports can be found at www.nfap.com. Twitter: [@NFAPResearch](https://twitter.com/NFAPResearch)

2111 Wilson Blvd., Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22201
phone: (703) 351-5042 fax: (703) 351-9292 www.nfap.com