

The move to rescind work authorization to certain categories of H-4 visa holders is in final stages, the Trump administration has told a US court, a decision that could hit tens of thousands of Indians.

H-4 visas are issued to the spouses of H-1B visa holders, a significantly large number of whom are high-skilled professionals from India.

The Trump administration is planning to end the Obama-era rule allowing spouses of H-1B visa holders to work legally in the US, a move that could have a devastating impact on more than 70,000 H-4 visa holders who have work permits.

The proposed rule is currently in final clearance, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) told a federal court in a status update.

The Trump administration yesterday told the court that once the proposal is cleared through the DHS, it will be sent to the Office of Management and Budget for review under Executive Order for regulatory and planning review.

As previously represented to the Court, the DHS intends to proceed with publication of this new rule concerning the H-4 visa rule, the DHS said in its court filing.

The previous Obama administration under an executive order in 2015 had started giving work authorization permits to certain categories of H-4 visa holders, who were mostly spouses of H-1B visa holders.

According to a recent Congressional report, a staggering 93 percent of the total H-4 visa holders in the US having work authorization are from India.

The final notification to rescind the work authorization is expected to be issued in June.

Last week, a bipartisan group of 130 US lawmakers led by influential Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal urged the Trump administration to continue granting work authorization to certain dependent spouses of non-immigrant workers holding H-1B visas.

Providing work authorization for accompanying spouses helps US employers recruit and

retain highly-qualified employees, putting US policy on par with other countries, such as Canada and Australia, competing to attract talented foreign nationals, the lawmakers had said.

The Trump administration is currently reviewing the H-1B visa policy as it thinks that the visa is being misused by companies to replace American workers.

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