S. 1234, The Backlog Elimination, Legal Immigration, and Employment Visa Enhancement (BELIEVE) Act

Merit-based immigration to the United States plays a critical role in the American economy, particularly in the health care and technology sectors. However, many high-skilled immigrants—including physicians, health care workers and professionals in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields—currently face a decades-long wait for a green card.1

Sen. Paul’s proposal reforms the employment-based immigration system in order to:

1. **Eliminate the green card backlog for high-skilled immigrants**
   The Paul proposal fully eliminates the green card backlog within 5-7 years by:
   - Increasing the total number of employment-based green cards available each year from 140,000 to 270,000. These increases are achieved by doubling the number of visas available for the EB-1, EB-2, EB-3, and EB-5 preferences.
   - Eliminating the 7% per-country cap
   - Exempting spouses and children of merit-based immigrants from counting against the worldwide limitation on the number of employment-based visas

2. **Alleviate concerns about health care workforce shortages**
   The Paul proposal addresses the potential for future shortages of nurses2 and other health care workers by:
   - Exempting health care workers in Department of Labor-designated shortage occupations (Schedule A Group I3) from counting against the worldwide limitation on employment-based visas
   - Exempting spouses and children of these health care workers from counting against the worldwide limitation on employment-based visas

3. **Provide protections for spouses and “legal Dreamers”**
   - Exempts children of E, H, and L visa holders from counting against worldwide immigration limitations
   - Allows spouses and children of E, H, and L visa holders to pursue employment
   - Allows those lawfully present to submit an application immediately for adjustment of status at the time their immigrant petition is approved (versus when a visa becomes available)

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