



IMMIGRATION UPDATE - FEBRUARY 24, 2025

Posted on February 24, 2025 by Cyrus Mehta

Headlines:

[Trump Administration Roundup: Highlights of Recent Immigration Developments](#) – The Trump administration has been busy. This article provides a non-exhaustive summary of selected immigration-related highlights.

[DHS Partially Vacates Haitian TPS Notice, Reduces Extension and Redesignation Period](#) – The Department of Homeland Security reduced the period of extension and redesignation of Haiti for TPS from 18 months to 12 months, with a new end date of August 3, 2025.

[DHS Revokes Extension of Work Authorization for Hong Kong DED Beneficiaries in United States](#) – DHS announced an extension of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) through February 5, 2027, for individuals covered by DED Hong Kong, who "are not subject to removal." However, DHS said that work authorization provided to certain Hong Kong residents is not extended.

[DOS Rescinds Previous Expansion of Interview Waiver Policy](#) – The Department of State updated its interview waiver policy.

Firm in the News

Details:

Trump Administration Roundup: Highlights of Recent Immigration Developments

In addition to the actions reported in other articles below, the Trump administration has been busy. Below is a non-exhaustive summary of selected highlights of other recent immigration-related developments:

- On February 18, 2025, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem [issued a memorandum](#) deputizing up to 600 special agents in

the Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service across the United States "to help with arresting and deporting illegal immigrants." DHS has also deputized Internal Revenue Service and Department of Justice employees "to help with immigration enforcement actions."

- On February 17, 2025, DHS [announced](#) the launch of a multimillion-dollar international and domestic advertising campaign warning undocumented migrants to "self-deport and stay out" of the United States or face being "hunted down and deported" with the inability to return. The series of ads "will run on radio, broadcast, and digital, in multiple countries and regions in various dialects. Ads will be hyper-targeted, including through social media, text message and digital to reach illegal immigrants in the interior of the United States, as well as internationally," DHS said.
- Caleb Vitello was removed as acting administrator of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and [reassigned](#) after a month in the position. Mr. Vitello reportedly will now oversee enforcement of arrests, targeting, and field operations. As of press time, there was no announcement of a replacement. The removal followed [reports](#) of Trump administration dissatisfaction with the rate of deportations. Daily arrests were in the 300-to-1,100 range, but daily quotas were established at 1,200 to 1,400. To reach 1 million in a year, daily deportations would need to reach more than 2,700. On Inauguration Day, President Trump promised "millions and millions" of deportations.
- After President Trump issued a [memorandum](#) in January to the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security "to expand the Migrant Operations Center at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to full capacity," [indicated](#) that some migrants would be sent there indefinitely rather than being deported to their home countries, and suggested that "30,000 beds" were available there for this purpose, the administration flew out the 178 migrants in Guantanamo as of February 20, 2025, following a [lawsuit](#) by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) seeking access to the detainees. [Reportedly](#), almost all of the group were flown to Honduras and onward to Venezuela where they were from. "Shipping immigrants off to Guantanamo without access to lawyers or the outside world cannot be reconciled with our country's laws or principles. It will now be up to the courts to reaffirm that the rule of law governs our nation," said Lee Gelernt, ACLU lawyer and lead counsel in the lawsuit.
- [Several lawsuits were filed](#) by a group of Venezuelans in California and

several immigrant advocacy organizations, including CASA and Make the Road New York, in a U.S. district court in Maryland. The lawsuits challenge the Trump administration's decision to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuelans. "This unconstitutional action forces nearly 600,000 Venezuelans and their families currently living in the U.S. with TPS protection into the untenable position of potentially being forced to return to a country experiencing what has been described as one of the worst humanitarian crises in the history of the Western Hemisphere," the groups said in a statement.

- A federal judge in the District of Columbia [ruled](#) that the Trump administration cannot deport eight asylum-seekers who are either in detention in the United States or have been deported. Some observers [note](#) that the case "will determine whether immigrants have a right to claim asylum on the southern border. On a broader level, it is also a test of whether presidential orders can supersede Congress."
- The Department of Justice [fired](#) 20 immigration judges, 13 of whom had not yet been sworn in, without explanation amid major cuts and backlogged immigration courts. According to reports, the backlog comprises approximately 3.7 million cases.

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DHS Partially Vacates Haitian TPS Notice, Reduces Extension and Redesignation Period

On February 20, 2025, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem [partially vacated](#) the July 1, 2024, [notice](#) that extended and redesignated Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for [an estimated 500,000 Haitians](#) and persons of no nationality who last habitually resided in Haiti. The [new notice](#) reduces the period of extension and redesignation of Haiti for TPS from 18 months to 12 months, with a new end date of August 3, 2025, and makes a corresponding change to the initial registration period for new applicants under the redesignation, which will now remain in effect through August 3, 2025.

The notice says that employers and federal, state, and local government agencies that previously accepted or are presented with an Employment Authorization Document for a Haitian TPS beneficiary "with the TPS category code of A-12 or C-19 that expires on February 3, 2026, must update their records to note that the validity date of the document is through August 3,

2025."

Those who filed TPS applications pursuant to the July 1, 2024, notice that remain pending with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) "may also choose to withdraw their TPS applications and request a refund of any filing fees by submitting a signed written withdrawal request to USCIS," according to the notice.

Secretary Noem "intends to conduct a review of current conditions in Haiti and make a new determination in due course," the notice states.

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DHS Revokes Extension of Work Authorization for Hong Kong DED Beneficiaries in United States

On January 15, 2025, then-President Biden issued a [memorandum](#) extending eligibility for Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for certain Hong Kong residents from February 5, 2025, to February 5, 2027. President Biden also directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide certain Hong Kong residents continued work authorization through February 5, 2027. On February 18, 2025, DHS [announced](#) an extension of DED through February 5, 2027, for individuals covered by DED Hong Kong, who "are not subject to removal." However, DHS said, "At this time, DED-related Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) provided to certain Hong Kong residents have not been extended."

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DOS Rescinds Previous Expansion of Interview Waiver Policy

On February 18, 2025, the Department of State (DOS) [released](#) the following update of its [interview waiver policy](#):

The Department of State has updated the categories of applicants that may be eligible for a waiver of the nonimmigrant visa interview. Consular officers have the authority and discretion to waive the in-person interview for the following categories as outlined in the Immigration and Nationality Act section 222(h):

- Applicants classifiable under the visa symbols A-1, A-2, C-3 (except attendants, servants, or personal employees of accredited officials), G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, NATO-1 through NATO-6, or TECRO E-1;

- Applicants for diplomatic- or official-type visas; and
- Applicants who previously held a visa in the same category that expired less than 12 months prior to the new application.

To be eligible for an interview waiver, applicants must also meet certain criteria, including that they:

- apply in their country of nationality or residence;
- have never been refused a visa (unless such refusal was overcome or waived); and
- have no apparent or potential ineligibility.

Consular officers may still require in-person interviews on a case-by-case basis or because of local conditions. We encourage applicants to check embassy and consulate websites for more detailed information about visa application requirements and procedures, and to learn more about the embassy or consulate's operating status and services.

This supersedes the Interview Waiver Update of December 21, 2023.

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Firm in the News

Cyrus Mehta was quoted by *BBC News* in [Trump's Citizenship Order Leaves Expecting Indian Immigrant Parents in Limbo](#). The article discusses how President Trump's birthright citizenship executive order is causing anxiety among Indians in H-1B nonimmigrant status who are wondering what nationality a child would have if the executive order took effect. "Their concern is valid. U.S. law has no provision for granting nonimmigrant status to a person born here," Mehta said.

Mr. Mehta was quoted by the *Texas Observer* in [ICE Prosecutor in Dallas Runs White Supremacist X Account](#), regarding a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement attorney who was discovered to have posted hateful messages on X regarding noncitizens appearing in immigration court under a pseudonym. "A government lawyer who vilifies people that he opposes in court, and puts that out under the radar, would clearly be engaging in conduct that's prejudicial to the administration of justice," he said.

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