

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to you regarding a March 15, 2022, press release outlining U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) plans to partially reopen certain domestic offices and resume in-person, non-emergency public services on or after June 4th. As part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), your agency plays a critical role in the immigration system, including adjudicating green cards, issuing temporary nonimmigrant worker visas, and holding naturalization ceremonies. Given the growing backlog of immigration benefits and imminent conclusion of the public health emergency, however, we urge you to consider an immediate re-opening of all offices and full staffing for in-person services.

According to recent reports, the processing backlog for immigration benefits has surpassed eight million, and U.S. employment authorization backlogs have reached nearly 1.5 million documents. Given the current labor shortage, we find these delays to be untimely and readily fixable. USCIS delays are causing economic harm at the micro- and macroeconomic level, lack transparency, and hurt hardworking families. The COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency is ending, it is time we return to normalcy and address more pressing problems. Delaying a return to in-person work and partially re-opening offices marginally impacts the ability to reduce the current backlog, while having negligible impact on the public health.

As you know, DHS has a responsibility to protect and serve our nation's immigration policies. The failure to reduce mounting backlogs amid a growing workforce shortage at the end of a public health emergency has severe short and long-term repercussions. It is long overdue that USCIS offices fully reopen with available staff to reduce backlogs and begin fulfilling the mission that it is tasked to complete.

Sincerely,



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



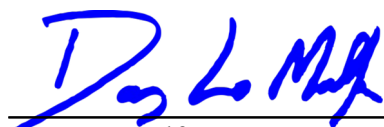
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress



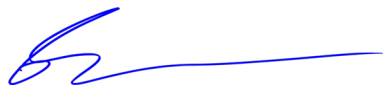
Nancy Mace
Member of Congress



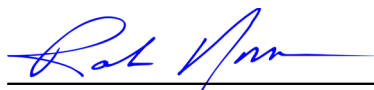
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



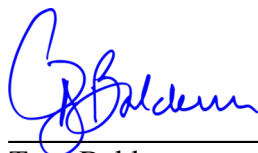
John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress



Brian J. Mast
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Troy Balderson
Member of Congress