

# Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act – SUMMARY

(Sponsored by Reps. Schneider, Cole, Finkenauer, and Bacon)

On May 8, Reps. Schneider, Cole, Finkenauer, and Bacon introduced the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act*. This bipartisan legislation would strengthen the healthcare workforce as it works to meet the challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Foreign-born doctors and nurses play a critical role in the U.S. healthcare system, representing one in every six healthcare workers—and play a particularly important role addressing the health needs of medically-underserved areas.

Thousands of nurses await green cards to come and work in the United States, despite many having already received approval, amid delays due to green card backlog or bureaucratic hold-ups.

Similarly, thousands of doctors currently serving in our communities on temporary visas continue to wait on final Legal Permanent Resident status as a result of the green card backlog. These doctors have been unable to adapt their work to meet the demands of the ongoing pandemic, facing restrictions like being unable to take up a second shift at a different hospital than their visa. This backlog and needless restrictions hamper our ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* would allow nurses with approved immigrant visas to come to the U.S. to work and would allow doctors with approved immigration petitions to adjust their status so that they have the necessary flexibility to meet the demands COVID-19 is placing on our healthcare system, while also ensuring they have a durable immigration status.

Under this legislation, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) would “recapture” up to 25,000 visas for nurses and up to 15,000 visas for doctors, as well as recapturing visas for the families of recipients.

These visas would be drawn from a pool that Congress had previously authorized but that have since gone unused. Country caps would not apply to these visas and they would be issued in order of priority date. Premium processing applies to qualifying petitions and applications in order to ensure timely action.

All individuals considered under this legislation would be required to meet the licensing requirements, pay required filing fees, and clear rigorous national security and criminal history background checks before they are eligible to receive recaptured green cards. Employers of these medical professionals would also need to attest that the immigrant medical professional has not displaced and will not displace an American worker.