Recruiting for the Future: A Realistic Road to a Points-tested Visa Program in the U.S.

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DISCLAIMER: The information provided on this presentation does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials available on this site are for general informational
Opening remarks:

• Dean Eduardo Peñalver, Cornell Law School
About the Authors:

Stephen Yale-Loehr, Professor of Immigration Law Practice

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Overview

- Introductions
- Presentation on findings and recommendations
- Expert panel discussion
- Q&A
- Closing Remarks

Access this report at: http://tiny.cc/cornell_points_report
Expert Panelists

Theresa Cardinal Brown
Director of Immigration Policy, Bipartisan Policy Center

Enrique Gonzalez
Managing Partner, Fragomen Worldwide

Esther Olavarria
Independent Consultant

Jeremy Robbins
Executive Director, New American Economy
Background
Basics of our Proposal

• New points-tested visa pilot program
• Awarding 50,000 permanent visas each year
• Aimed at high-skilled foreign workers
• Points-based selection system, tailored to long-term economic/human capital needs of U.S.
Goals of Proposed Pilot Program

1. **Pressure Relief**: Providing additional capacity for high-skilled immigration without changing existing skilled visa programs.

2. **Proof of Concept**: Providing a low-cost, low-risk path to testing the efficacy of a points-tested visa program in the United States.

3. **Filling a Policy Gap**: Providing for long-term economic and social needs of the United States.
Why start by focusing on skilled immigration?

• Skilled immigrants create jobs and boost salaries of U.S. workers.
• Current skilled immigration program is broken.
• A good first step in a longer, incremental path towards immigration reform.
Why use a “points system”? 

• What is a points system, and how are points systems related to “merit-based” or “skills-based” immigration? 

• Benefits of points-based selection systems for: 
  – Applicants 
  – Immigration Officers 
  – Receiving country economy
Points-based systems around the world:
Lessons learned from points-based systems in other countries:

• Points systems:
  – are remarkably effective at attracting skilled foreign workers, especially those that allocate permanent visas.
  – can be easily tailored to policy goals by adjusting: pre-requisites, point categories, point values, and/or application process.
  – can coexist with, and even compliment employer-driven visa programs.
  – should be supported by a robust & comprehensive data-gathering infrastructure.
  – are more efficient and responsive when administered using a two-step (or “Expression of Interest”) application system.
Specific content of our proposal: Elements

• Points-tested visa program
  – 10-year pilot program
  – 50,000 new permanent visas (green cards) per year
• “Expression of Interest” application process
• Focus on long-term human capital accumulation
• Admissions and longitudinal outcome data gathering
• Regular mandatory policy review process
• Standing immigration policy advisory board
Specific content of our proposal: Points Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree Earned</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus: Degree from U.S. institution</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Proficiency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Language Proficiency</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Experience</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus: Experience working in the U.S.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant has spouse/partner/1st-degree relative that is U.S. Resident</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant has spouse/partner/1st-degree relative also applying for admission</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus: Applicant is a national of a developing country</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus: Applicant is not male</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Possible Points</strong></td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Merits of our proposal

Proportion of Green Cards Issued Each Year by Visa Stream (Values based on category averages from 2015-2018)
Merits of our proposal:

- **Popular:** American public overwhelmingly support increasing number of skilled foreign workers admitted yearly.
- **Low-cost & low-risk:** Time limited, small footprint, low administrative costs.
- **Less controversial:** Does not require *any* cuts to existing immigration categories.
- **Easy to implement:** Designed as a stand-alone bill, Easily-enacted policy tool that would boost U.S. economy
Conclusion

To download a copy of slide deck, or recording of http://tiny.cc/Cornell_Points_Report
Panel Discussion

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Thank you.

Please look out for our follow-up email with resources!


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