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**OBAMA IS CONSIDERING SHORTENING WAITING PERIODS FOR
PERMANENT RESIDENCE.**

By Christopher A. Kerosky

President Obama is considering issuing an Executive Order which would substantially increase the number of green cards per year for immigrants in family and work categories.

His Action would dramatically cut waiting periods.

One way Obama would do this is by counting the visas in a way different from the way the government bureaucracy did so previously. Instead of counting each person immigrating as one, Obama's idea would count entire families as one visa, no matter how many members of the family were immigrating. This would open up many numbers from the quota and dramatically reduce the wait for permanent residence for those persons now waiting on a petition by a family member such as parent or sibling.

Obama is apparently also considering the "recapture" of up to 800,000 green card numbers from past years, which would mean an immediate leap in the priority numbers on the Visa Bulletin and result in a sort of surge in adjustments in the next few years.

The proposals would more than double the number of people allowed into the country on employment- and family-based green cards from the annual global cap of 366,000, according to estimates from some sources.

The effect would be that persons waiting here or in Mexico for many years on petitions filed by parents, siblings and others would see their waiting periods cut significantly. Many thousands of persons would immediately become eligible for their permanent residence.

Executive Action instead of Immigration Reform.

A comprehensive immigration bill approved by the Senate last year also included provisions to increase visas and Obama promised to sign it; but the Republican-controlled House refused to take up the legislation.

As a result, Obama has said he will circumvent Congress and take action on his own to help the undocumented community. President Obama had originally promised to issue his immigration reform “Executive Order” before the end of summer, but recently he postponed any action until after the November elections. The White House is now saying that the President’s action will likely happen in December.

The President does not have the power to change the permanent residence laws or other legislation without the approval of Congress. But he appears to be considering major steps within the scope of his Executive authority to improve the lives of the undocumented.

The President is also considering expansion of Deferred Action for Childhood Applicants (DACA) to include parents of DACA holders and parents of persons born in the United States. This would extend deferred status immediately to as many as 5 million undocumented in this country, allowing them to obtain work permits and a temporary right to remain in the U.S. Under certain circumstances, persons with DACA can travel outside the U.S..

Clearly this type of Executive action by Obama will dramatically change the lives of the undocumented community.