

DECEMBER VISA AVAILABILITY

The bulletin issued by the Visa Office of the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State gives the following availability position for issuance of immigrant visas during December 2004:

Persons Chargeable to India

Family-Sponsored Preferences

1st Preference	Nov 22, 2000
2nd Preference	
2A	Jul 01, 2000
2B	Jul 22, 1995
3rd Preference	Dec 01, 1997
4th Preference	Feb 15, 1992

Employment-Based Preferences

1st Preference	Current
2nd Preference	Current
3rd Preference	Current
Other Workers	Current
4th Preference	Current
Certain Religious	
Workers	Current
5th Preference	Current
Targeted Emp	
Areas	Current

Persons Chargeable to Other Countries

For other chargeability areas, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, and the nations of Africa, the cut-off dates for December 2004 are:

Family-Sponsored Preferences

1st Preference	Nov 22, 2000
2nd Preference	
2A	Jul 01, 2000
2B	Jul 22, 1995
3rd Preference	Dec 01, 1997
4th Preference	Oct 08, 1992

Employment-Based Preferences

1st Preference	Current
2nd Preference	Current
3rd Preference	Current
Other Workers	Current
4th Preference	Current
Certain Religious	
Workers	Current
5th Preference	Current
Targeted Emp	
Areas	Current

20,000 U.S. Graduates to get H1B

It is expected that President Bush will sign on December 6 or soon thereafter a bill passed by both houses. Once passed, aliens possessing master's or higher degrees awarded by universities in the United States will be exempt from the numerical limitations on issuance of H1B visas. It is important to bear in mind that not more than 20,000 visas per fiscal year will be issued under this exemption.

This exemption will become effective 90 days after President signs the bill. The fees payable for filing petitions for H1B workers are being substantially raised and they become effective as soon as the bill is signed.

We shall discuss pertinent provisions of H.R. 4818 in detail once it is enacted.