



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on November 14, 2017

## 28,783 Visas Granted to Aliens From Nations That Are State Sponsors of Terrorism

The White House released a statement on November 13 noting that between 2007 and 2016 the U.S. government, through its Visa Lottery program, issued 28,783 permanent resident visas to people from countries designated as “State Sponsors of Terrorism.” These included 20,739 individuals from Iran; 7,232 from Sudan, and 812 from Syria.



The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website states: “The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV Program) makes up to 50,000 immigrant visas available annually, drawn from random selection among all entries to individuals who are from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States.”

The State Department website notes that countries determined by the secretary of state to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism are designated pursuant to three laws (and then names the laws). It goes on to state: “Currently there are three countries designated under these authorities: Iran, Sudan, and Syria.”

Fox News reported that the Diversity Visa program originated as part of a bill introduced in 1990 by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who was then a member of the House. Schumer’s measure to make a set number of visas available to “diversity immigrants” from certain countries became part of a larger House immigration bill that was sponsored by Schumer and 31 others, including several Republicans.

That bill was ultimately passed in a bipartisan vote, and was signed by President George H.W. Bush. President Trump has called for ending the program, as well as the termination of chain migration, which allows immigrants to enter the country if they have a relative already living in the United States.

We noted in [our November 1 article](#) about the terrorist attack in New York the previous day that the suspect, Sayfullo Saipov, who allegedly used a truck to run down and kill eight people, is a native of Uzbekistan who came to the United States in March 2010 through the Diversity Visa Program.

During a November 1 White House press briefing, a reporter asked Press Secretary Sarah Sanders to comment on President Trump’s statement that he’s starting the process of terminating the diversity lottery program and asked, “What did he mean by ‘starting the process’?”

Sanders answered:

Just that, we’re going to continue pushing for and advocating for getting rid of this program. It’s something he’s talked about. We’d like to see the lottery visa program not be part of any



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immigration system that we have in this country.

CNSNews quoted from the November 13 White House e-mail about the program:

President Trump has called on Congress to eliminate the Visa Lottery and end Chain Migration.... These policies endanger national security, strain federal resources, and imperil the economic security of vulnerable American workers.

Every single year, through a computer-generated random drawing, the Visa Lottery selects 50,000 foreign nationals to apply for permanent residence in the United States and get Green Cards. Many of them have absolutely no ties to the United States, no special skills, and limited education.

The Visa Lottery program was championed by Ted Kennedy in 1990 and co-sponsored by Chuck Schumer. In a May 2006 floor speech, Schumer praised what he called “an excellent program” and urged his colleagues to keep it in operation. “My city of New York has dramatically benefited from this program,” Schumer said, “So I plead with my colleagues, keep the diversity visa program.”

As we saw, at least one terrorist has entered our country via the Visa Lottery program, but it is far from the only way terrorists or potential terrorists can enter our country. Nor are the three countries named by the State Department as state sponsors of terrorism — Iran, Sudan, and Syria — the only places rife with terrorist activity. On September 24, just hours before his previous travel ban was set to expire, President Trump signed a proclamation limiting the immigrant and nonimmigrant entry into the United States from eight countries. The president’s proclamation continued the ban on immigration from five of the six countries in the previous ban: Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia. It also added three new countries to the list: Chad, North Korea, and Venezuela.

As we saw on October 31, the suspected terrorist came from Uzbekistan, but there are many places where potential terrorists can come from; therefore, diligent vetting of all immigrants is essential. Fifteen of the 19 September 11 hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia, one was Egyptian, one was Lebanese, and two were from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Following the terror attack in New York City on October 31, President Trump tweeted, “I have just ordered Homeland Security to step up our already Extreme Vetting Program. Being politically correct is fine, but not for this!”

The president’s plan sounds like a good one, if it can be implemented without begin blocked by a federal judge. Almost from the beginning of the Trump administration, the president’s executive orders restricting travel to the United States from countries that are hotbeds of terrorism have been held up by one district court judge after another. Several of these decisions have been appealed to the Supreme Court, which ruled June 26 that the travel ban could go into effect, but the rogue judges persisted. For example, on July 13, Judge Derrick Watson of the Federal District Court in Honolulu imposed his own interpretation of the Supreme Court’s June 26 ruling — exempting only one category of foreigners from the travel ban.

The only permanent solution might be for Congress to fill in the gaps and enact stricter immigration restrictions and vetting procedures though legislation, a course that would be more difficult for judges to block than presidential executive orders.

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