

# Trump Administration and Republican Senators Announce Proposed Immigration Legislation: The RAISE Act

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**PRACTICES** Immigration, International, Labor and Employment

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On August 2, 2017, President Trump and Senators David Perdue (R-GA) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) announced an immigration bill, which would profoundly amend and re-structure the Immigration Nationality Act. Although President Trump has issued several executive orders emphasizing public and national security, as well as enforcement initiatives, the Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy Act (the "RAISE Act") is the first piece of significant immigration legislation to be proposed during the Trump Administration. If passed, it would signal a profound paradigm shift in U.S. immigration law, de-emphasizing family-based migration and instead adopting a skills and points-based green card system. The law would not affect temporary, non-immigrant visas such as H-1Bs, L-1, TNs, E-1/2s and other non-immigrant classifications.

The RAISE Act is purportedly modeled on the Canadian and Australian immigration systems. As such, it would adopt a points system that would prioritize educational level; English proficiency; age (persons aged 26-31 would receive the highest points in this category, while persons over 50 would receive no points); and salary being offered by a U.S. employer, as applicable. The current employment-based immigrant visa system would be scrapped. The idea is to give preference to the most meritorious and highly-skilled workers, while simultaneously reducing purely family-based immigration. The law would only retain family categories for spouses and minor children, while eliminating current categories that permit elderly parents and siblings to migrate to the United States. Notably, it would also eliminate the visa lottery program, which currently awards green cards to 55,000 persons annually, and sets an annual cap of 50,000 on refugee admissions. The RAISE Act would also significantly reduce overall annual immigration to half a million within a 10-year period. This reduction would represent a nearly 50 percent cut from current totals.

Should you have questions regarding how the RAISE Act, if passed, may impact your business, please contact one of the lawyers listed below.