

US judge rejects business group's challenge to Trump's \$100,000 H-1B visa fee

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U.S. flag, H-1B visa application form and displayed company logos are seen in this illustration taken September 26, 2025. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/Illustration [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

Dec 23 (Reuters) - A federal judge on Tuesday rejected a challenge by the largest U.S. business lobby group to President [Donald Trump's](#) \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visas for highly skilled foreign workers, saying it fell under his broad powers to regulate immigration.

U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell in Washington, D.C., rejected arguments by [the U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) that the fee conflicts with federal immigration law and will lead many companies, hospitals and other employers to cut jobs and the services they provide to the public.

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"The parties' vigorous debate over the ultimate wisdom of this political judgment is not within the province of the courts," [Howell wrote](#). "So long as the actions dictated by the policy decision and articulated in the Proclamation fit within the confines of the law, the Proclamation must be upheld."

Howell is an appointee of Democratic former President Barack Obama.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Chamber's executive vice president and chief counsel, Daryl Joseffer, said many small and medium-sized businesses will be unable to afford the fee.

"We are disappointed in the court's decision and are considering further legal options to ensure that the H-1B visa program can operate as Congress intended," Joseffer said in a statement.

The H-1B program allows U.S. employers to hire foreign workers with training in specialty fields. Technology companies in particular rely heavily on workers who receive H-1B visas. The program offers 65,000 visas annually, with another 20,000 visas for workers with advanced degrees, approved for three to six years.

Trump's order would sharply raise the cost of obtaining H-1B visas, which had typically come with about \$2,000 to \$5,000 in fees depending on various factors.

The Chamber in its lawsuit says the new fee would force businesses that rely on the H-1B program to choose between dramatically increasing their labor costs or hiring fewer highly-skilled foreign workers.

A group of Democratic-led U.S. states and a coalition of employers, nonprofits and religious organizations [have also filed lawsuits](#) challenging the fee.

Trump in an order imposing the fee invoked his power under federal immigration law to restrict the entry of certain foreign nationals that would be detrimental to U.S. interests.


Howell on Tuesday said Trump had adequately backed up his claim that the H-1B program was displacing U.S. workers, including by citing examples of companies that laid off thousands of Americans while simultaneously petitioning for H-1B visas.

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