

Trump extends immigration bans despite opposition from U.S. business groups

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Central American migrants surrender to U.S. Border Patrol agent south of the U.S.-Mexico border fence in El Paso, Texas. (File photo)

Washington, January 1 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump has extended a pair of immigration bans that block many “green card” applicants and temporary foreign workers from entering the country, measures he says are needed to protect US workers amid the pandemic-battered economy.

The bans, which were issued in April and June, were set to expire on Dec. 31, but will be extended until March 31, 2021, the latest in a series of last-gasp immigration moves by the outgoing Trump administration. A broad range of businesses oppose the ban on certain foreign workers.

President-elect Joe Biden, who takes office on January 20th, has criticized the restrictions, but has not yet said whether he would immediately reverse them. Trump issued the bans in the form of presidential proclamations that could be swiftly undone.

At least 20 million people remain on unemployment benefits in the United States as the novel coronavirus continues to spread nationwide.

In October, a federal judge in California blocked Trump’s ban on foreign guest workers as it applied to hundreds of thousands of U.S. businesses that fought the policy in court. The judge found the ban would cause “irreparable harm” to the businesses by interfering with their operations and leading them to lay off employees and close open positions.

The U.S. Department of Justice appealed the decision to the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which is scheduled to hear arguments on January 19th.

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