



EXPERTS ARGUE H-1B VISAS VITAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION IN AUSTIN AND BEYOND

CBS Austin

By Andrew Freeman

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Over the weekend, President-elect Donald Trump indicated his support for H-1B visas designed for highly skilled foreign workers, though in 2016 he pledged to end the very same program.

The turn comes after donor and confidant Elon Musk also took to social media voicing support for the visas, despite some in the GOP who believe the visas come at the expense of jobs for Americans.

From tech to healthcare to even finance, President of the **Texas Business Leadership Council Justin Yancy** says these industries are growing faster than Central Texas can even fill those jobs.

"Over the last, you know, two decades, Texas has grown at a record pace," **Yancy** said. "We're expanding, and all those companies that are here are not always able to find the workforce that they need."

He says hundreds of thousands of jobs are open across the state, making those highly skilled positions even more difficult and expensive to fill.

"We also need to have the ability for companies who can't find what they need here, if it's not available, to bring in other employees," **Yancy** said.

That's where the H-1B visa comes in.

"The cost of educating people in the United States to take those jobs is so big, often we end up with a deficit and we have to bring people from abroad." Austin immigration attorney George Lobb said.

Lobb says the visa is a way for American companies to bring in highly skilled foreign talent, capped at 65,000 per year in the U.S.

"Most H-1Bs are going to be tech workers or other highly skilled workers, researchers at universities who wouldn't otherwise qualify for academic-type visas," Lobb said.

And there's no shortage of need between the University of Texas, tech giants like Samsung and Tesla, and large hospital systems like Ascension or St. David's.

"If you were going to cut those down, like we saw during the first Trump administration, you would see a slowdown in production and productivity," Lobb said.

The visa doesn't just create jobs in Austin but has more immediate economic benefits too.

"Those are local dollars spent," Lobb said. "So if you're paying someone locally, they're going to turn around and spend that dollar at the dry cleaner or the grocery store or at the restaurant which Austinites benefit from."

This is why **Yancy** says these visas aren't just good for Austin, but the entire country.

"Immigration is a very positive thing, and always has been for the United States when done correctly," **Yancy** said. "And we need a system that works better so that individuals can really process and go through the immigration system in an appropriate way."