

TROY BALDERSON
12TH DISTRICT, OHIO

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,
AND TECHNOLOGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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December 4, 2019

The Honorable Chad Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Wolf,

We write to you to express our support for the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) organization for their dedication to the Hindu population in my district, as well as across the United States. I request that BAPS be included in the short list of organizations currently receiving preclearance for R-1 visas via the Department of Homeland Security's Known Employer pilot program.

BAPS represents the largest network of Hindu temples in North America and works to improve communities through Hindu ideals of faith, unity, and selfless service. We stand with our constituents and colleagues of all races and religions and seek to assist them whenever possible. A critical fabric of local communities across the country, BAPS holds true to their Hindu traditions while working within the framework of a strict legal immigration process.

Currently, there are over ninety-seven BAPS temples across the country, including the BAPS Columbus Mandir that serves our constituents. BAPS and their temples provide valuable services to surrounding communities. At the federal level, BAPS advocates on behalf of Hindu Americans and provides insight on the domestic policies directly impacting the community. Continuing to spread their values and services, BAPS also supports the construction of traditional temples across the country. With the thousands of specialized architects and craftsmen from India needed for these construction projects alone, approval for DHS's Known Employer program would simplify the extensive process for the BAPS organization and eliminate stress on an already exhausted immigration system here in the US.

BAPS qualifies as a 501(c)(3) sponsor for visa approvals pertaining to Hindu spiritual leaders, architects, and monks. Without premium processing it can take up to nine months for these individuals to receive an R-1 visa. This extensive delay prevents BAPS from further providing community service events and religious celebrations. Please consider partnering with BAPS to further expand DHS's Known Employer pilot and reduce cost, modernize a complex process, and alleviate unnecessary stress for a vibrant organization in my community.

RECEIVED
By ESEC at 9:28 am, Dec 05, 2019

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Brittany Madni on Congressman Balderson's staff at madni@mail.house.gov or at (202) 225-5355.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Balderson", written over a horizontal line.

Troy Balderson
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Stivers", written over a horizontal line.

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joyce Beatty", written over a horizontal line.

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

January 24, 2020

The Honorable Troy Balderson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Balderson:

Thank you for your December 4, 2019 letter regarding Bocharanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha. Acting Secretary Wolf asked that I respond on his behalf.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) created the Known Employer pilot to assess the effectiveness of streamlined processing for certain immigrant and nonimmigrant employment-based visa petitions. USCIS launched the pilot in March 2016, and it has subsequently been extended through May 31, 2020.

Participation in the Known Employer pilot is limited to nine employers at any one time, and there are currently four openings created by the removal of inactive participants. USCIS is in the process of evaluating new employers to fill these openings and will consider your recommendation, but please note that eligibility is based upon a number of factors, including the filing volume across the eligible immigrant and nonimmigrant classifications. More information about the Known Employer pilot can be found on the USCIS website.¹

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The co-signers of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark R. Koumans".

Mark R. Koumans
Acting Director

¹ See <https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/information-employers-employees/known-employer-pilot>.