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Fix Immigration to Grow Innovation

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According to Aneesh Chopra, former Chief Technology Officer of the United States, fixing the nation's broken immigration system will support American growth and innovation. Chopra shares his personal perspective on the issue, as his father was an engineer who immigrated to America for work. Chopra argues that it's time to explore new ideas to solve the immigration issue, including changes to the work visa system.



Transcript

I did want to pause for a moment and talk a bit about our immigration system. How many of you in this room are students under some form of immigration status? Probably from the hands maybe 15 percent. I want to speak to you, because on a personal level this is how my father came to this country. As an engineer at Villanova, dad holds three patents and because he had the opportunity to pursue the American dream, we have the chance to be in this key country; I have the job reporting to the President of the United States. In one generation, that's the story of America. We have a broken immigration system. And the President, just a few weeks back, called on all of us to have a civil conversation, to talk about why and how we can move this conversation forward and actually fix what's broken. The President spoke at length about the broad comprehensive nature of this challenge, but he highlighted the importance of high-skilled immigration. And he introduced a set of policy initiatives that we stand for, as an administration, that we believe speak to all of you. For example, how about we stable a green card when you graduated with a PhD or a Masters in stem fields; what about a startup visa program that allows you to stay in this country if you can raise the capital and scale up a business, hiring American workers? How about we fix the legal immigration system, to clear out the backlog and to address some of the challenges about how we allow families in or our through the legal system and how do we strengthen that which works and fix what's broken in initiatives like the H1B program.

President has called for all of these to happen. It's personal for me cause I added in there the picture of me when I was 11, I visited India for the first time. That's my dad's village, no indoor plumbing, typical at the time. They were refugees when India and Pakistan bifurcated at the turn of India's independence and Pakistan's independence. And so, this is a real challenge for our country and to the 15 percent of you in the room. The President understands and has called for us to address this and has many of you in mind when we look to fix the system.