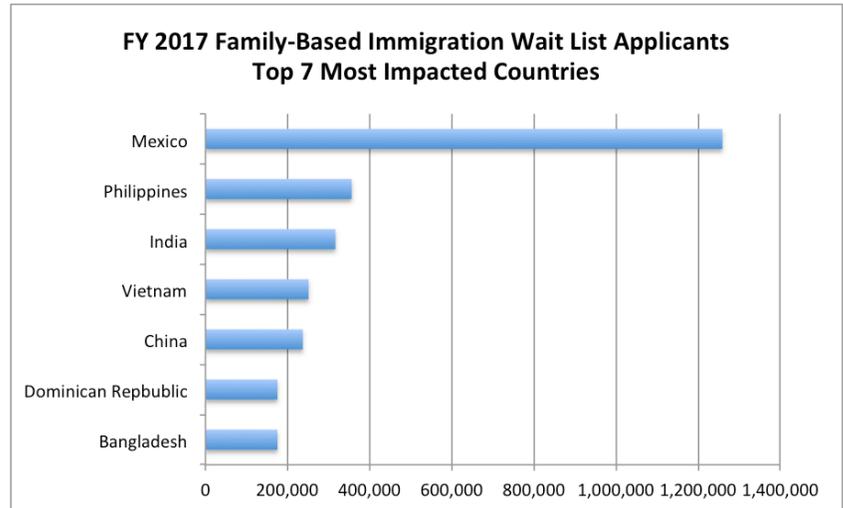


## How Family-Based Immigration Benefits Southeast Asian Americans – Standing Up for Our Families & Our Rights

### BACKGROUND ON FAMILY-BASED IMMIGRATION

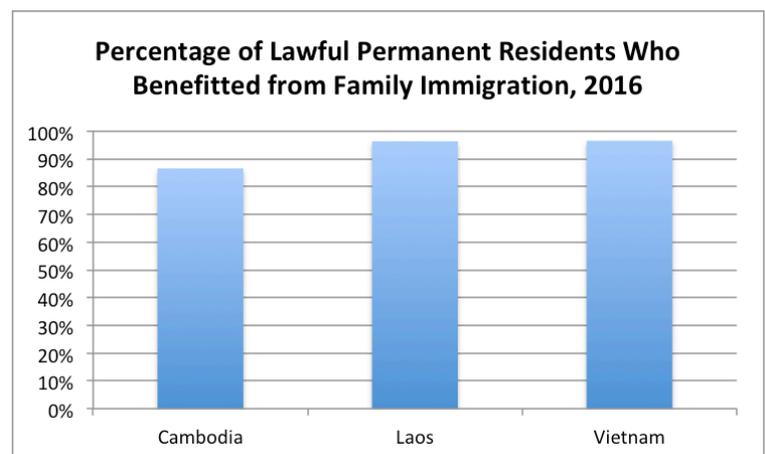
The ability to sponsor relatives and family members to live and work in the U.S. has been a cornerstone of the U.S. immigration system for more than 50 years. Prior to the passage of this policy, numbers of immigrants from Asia into the U.S. were very small. As a result of this shift, millions of Asian American families have been able to reunite with their loved ones through family-based immigration. Many more continue to wait for years due to massive backlogs in the outdated system.



**Immigrants from Vietnam face the fourth largest number of visa backlogs, as 250,944 people wait in line to reunite with a loved one.**<sup>i</sup> Cambodia has a backlog of more than 9,000 people, and Laos has a backlog of close to 2,000.<sup>ii</sup> Family members caught in these lines can wait up to 13 years for their application to be processed.<sup>iii</sup> Someone applying for a family-based immigration visa today would likely wait even longer as the backlog continues to grow.

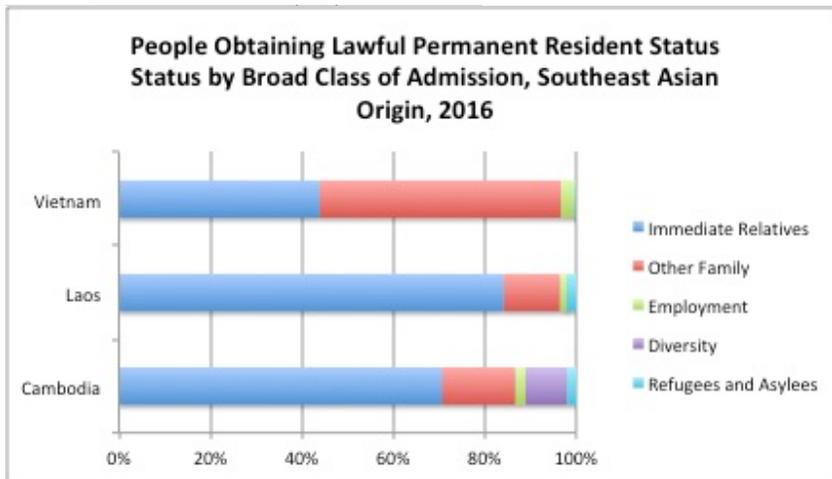
### FAMILY UNITY MAKES AMERICA STRONGER

Studies have shown that immigrant communities supported by family networks help our economy thrive.<sup>iv</sup> Family support is critical to building a social network for immigrants to become successful business owners, homeowners, and entrepreneurs. **That is why we must defend against policies that threaten the ability of families to be with their loved ones, and support legislation that will address the current backlogs in our visa system.**



## FAMILY UNITY HEALS WOUNDS OF WAR AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Southeast Asian refugees were forcibly displaced from their homes due to U.S. occupation in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in the 1970s. As the largest refugee community ever resettled in the U.S., family sponsorship has long been a crucial avenue to reunite families splintered by war. In 2016, 87% of Cambodians, 96% of Laotians, and 97% of Vietnamese immigrants who received a green card were able to do so due to a family-based visa petition.<sup>v</sup>



In 2016, 53% of all Vietnamese, 16% of Cambodian, and 12% of Laotian immigrants who obtained a green card did so due to **extended-family visa sponsorship** for siblings, parents, and adult children.<sup>v</sup> That is equivalent to more than 22,000 Southeast Asian American families who have benefitted from extended-family visa sponsorship in 2016 alone. **The Trump administration now wants to eliminate extended-family visa sponsorship for siblings, parents, and adult children.**

## TAKE ACTION – TELL US YOUR STORY!

Help us highlight stories of Southeast Asian American family members who have benefitted from family-based visa sponsorship. If you or someone you know would like to share your story, consider taking 5 minutes to fill out this form to protect our families: <http://bit.ly/2u1DFKI> or contact SEARAC at [searac@searac.org](mailto:searac@searac.org).

### REFERENCES

- <sup>i</sup> “Annual Report of Immigrant Visa Applicants in the Family-sponsored and Employment-based preferences Registered at the National Visa Center as of November 1, 2017”: [https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/ImmigrantStatistics/WaitingList/WaitingListItem\\_2017.pdf](https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/ImmigrantStatistics/WaitingList/WaitingListItem_2017.pdf)
- <sup>ii</sup> Asian Americans Advancing Justice, AAJC
- <sup>iii</sup> “Visa Bulletin For February 2018”: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-lawo/visa-bulletin/2018/visa-bulletin-for-february-2018.html>
- <sup>iv</sup> ALLA Policy Brief: The Value of Family-Based Immigration: [www.aila.org/infonet/aila-policy-brief-the-value-of-family-based-immig](http://www.aila.org/infonet/aila-policy-brief-the-value-of-family-based-immig)
- <sup>v</sup> Department of Homeland Security, “Table 10: Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Broad Class of Admission and Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal year 2016”: <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2016/table10>