



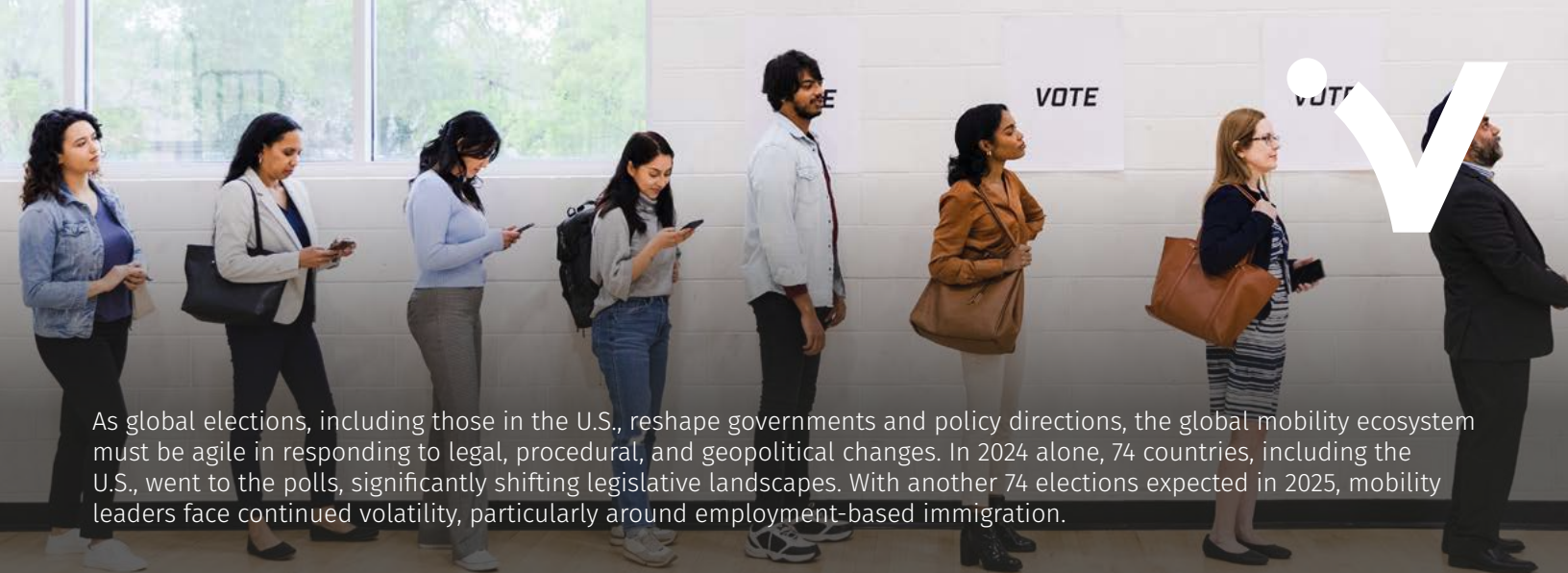
# Conversations with Mobilty Leaders

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Navigating  
Immigration and  
Global Mobility in  
an Election Year

J U N E 2 0 2 5

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As global elections, including those in the U.S., reshape governments and policy directions, the global mobility ecosystem must be agile in responding to legal, procedural, and geopolitical changes. In 2024 alone, 74 countries, including the U.S., went to the polls, significantly shifting legislative landscapes. With another 74 elections expected in 2025, mobility leaders face continued volatility, particularly around employment-based immigration.

# Key Highlights

## 1. The Global Context of Change

- 2024 saw historic voter turnout and global engagement, with many incumbent governments replaced.
- Immigration, especially employment-based immigration, was a core election issue worldwide, indicating a heightened policy focus in 2025.
- Global mobility programs must be adaptable to rapidly evolving regulations and geopolitical shifts.

## 2. Shifts in U.S. Immigration Policy

### Employment-Based Immigration in Context

- Only 27% of U.S. green cards are employment-based; 42% are issued to immediate relatives of citizens.
- 2024 visa statistics:
  - o About 400,000 H-1B applications were approved in 2024. This is slightly down from 2022 when 442,425 were approved.
  - o To put this in perspective, approximately 401,000 F-1 student visas were issued in 2024
  - o Smaller numbers for O, TN, and E-3 categories
- Fiscal year 2026 H-1B cap lottery entries declined by 26% year over year

### Key Policy Changes Before January 2025

- J-1 Visa Skills List Changes: many interns and trainees from countries like India and China are now exempt from the 2-year home residency rule, improving adjustment-of-status opportunities.
- H-1B Modernization Regulation (effective Jan 17, 2025):
  - o Redefines “specialty occupation” with stricter degree relevance requirements.
  - o Increases worksite compliance and enforces site visit protocols.
  - o Codifies deference policy—prior approvals are respected unless material job changes occur.
  - o Reinforces bona fide employer-employee relationships.
  - o Adjusts cap gap protections for opt students awaiting H-1B start.





### 3. Executive Orders and Legislative Proposals

#### Key Executive Orders

- EO 14161 – enhanced screening of non-citizens, more scrutiny at visa interviews and border entries.
- America First Trade Policy (Jan 20, 2025): may impact treaty-based visas like TN (USMCA), H-1B1 (Chile, Singapore), and E-3 (Australia) as trade agreements are reviewed.

#### Legislative Watch

- Numerous congressional bills introduced in 2024 and 2025 propose significant immigration changes (e.g., visa restrictions based on nationality), though most remain in early stages.

### 4. Operational Impacts for Global Mobility Leaders

#### Processing Delays & Scrutiny

- Expect increased visa appointment delays due to reduced eligibility for dropbox renewals (from 24 to 12 months).
- Rising requests for evidence (RFES), especially for TN and H-1B visas.
- Premium processing is notably efficient, offering a workaround to standard delays.

#### Employer Best Practices

- Be prepared for more frequent and detailed USCIS site visits.
- Ensure employees carry complete documentation (I-797s, job letters) at entry points.
- Legal teams may request more extensive data due to changing form requirements.
- Monitor treaty visa implications tied to evolving trade policies.



## Recommendations

- **Engage proactively with your immigration counsel.** Review internal processes for visa support, compliance, and documentation.
- **Educate your business units.** Ensure HR and hiring teams understand evolving visa requirements and timelines.
- **Audit risk and readiness.** Implement response protocols for site visits and government inquiries.
- **Communicate with assignees.** Provide timely updates and support for impacted employees.

## Conclusion

2025 will be another high-stakes year for global mobility. With political transitions influencing immigration policy and processing dynamics, organizations must take a proactive, well-informed approach. While regulatory changes create challenges, they also offer opportunities to reassess strategies, tighten compliance, and strengthen support for mobile talent.

*If you are interested in joining Sirva's "Conversations with Mobility Leaders" program, please reach out to your Sirva representative or email us at [marketing@sirva.com](mailto:marketing@sirva.com).*

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