

Immigration Attorney Offers Expert Opinion on Proposal for New "Gold Card" Pathway to Residency and Citizenship

New York immigration lawyer Scott

Messinger says "Gold Card" is a "Golden

Ticket" compared to the job creation requirements of the EB-5 visa. by Nadia El-Yaouti

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- President Donald Trump

“

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Scott Messinger, New York-based Immigration Attorney

unveiled his new Gold Card during a press conference in the Oval Office earlier this week, and while questions remain about what this new pathway to citizenship means for foreign-born immigrants, it's not as novel an idea as it may sound.

Trump announced in the Oval Office on February 25th during a press conference, "You have a green card. This is a gold card." Trump added, "We're going to be putting a price on that card of about \$5 million, and that's going to give you Green Card privileges, plus it's going to be a route to

citizenship. And wealthy people will be coming into our country by buying this card.”

Days after the announcement, Howard Lutnick, President Trump's commerce secretary, went on to share that the new visa program already has 250,000 applicants. It's worth noting that as of this reporting, the website for applications does not appear to be launched yet.

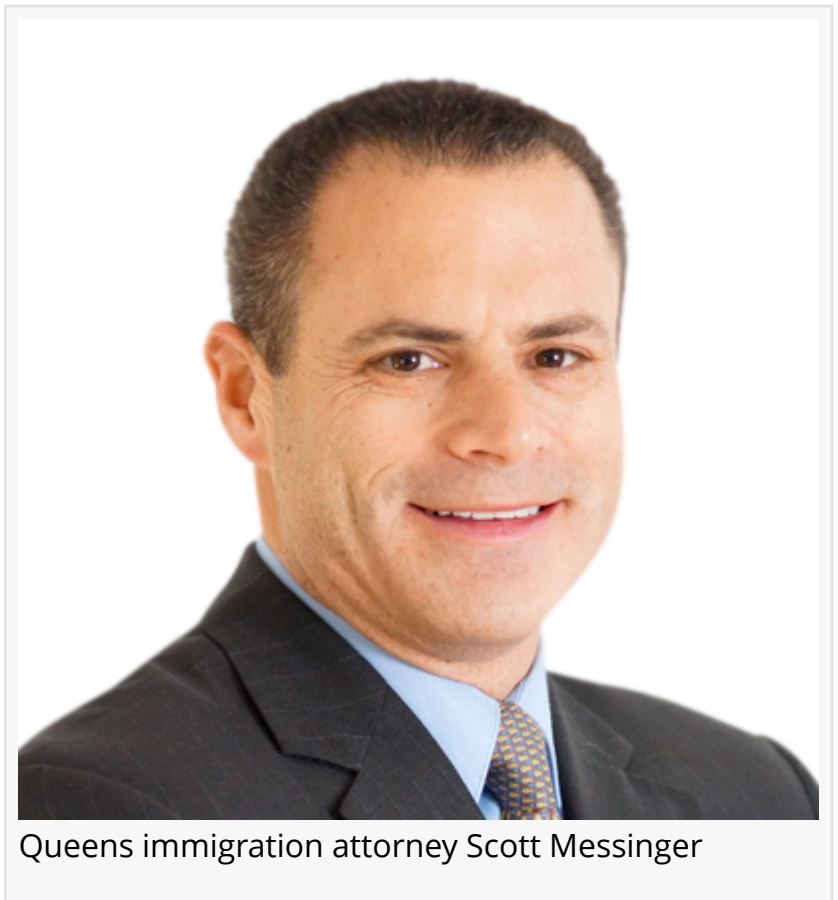
While the details of the new program have yet to be fully released, Trump explained that the new program would give prospective immigrants U.S. residency in exchange for a \$5 million investment in the country. What the structure of these investments looks like or specific details of the plan have yet to be shared, though Trump explained that more information would come out in the coming weeks.

The new program will replace the existing EB-5 Visa. Currently, the EB-5 program has similar requirements, though it requires applicants to pay anywhere between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in fees to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS).

In addition to those fees, applicants must commit to investing anywhere between \$800,000 and \$1 million into the U.S. economy and create at least 10 new job roles for American workers.

According to the latest data, there has been strong demand for the EB-5 visa, with a total of 4,567 filings of Form I-526E and 281 new filings of Form I-526 in FY2024. Compared to 2023, there was an 85% growth in demand for EB-5 in fiscal year 2024.

The natural benefit of seeking citizenship through this route is that applicants generally see a faster turnaround time in the processing of their applications. In 2024, many applicants, especially those seeking residency in rural areas, saw about 12-month turnaround times.



Queens immigration attorney Scott Messinger

In announcing his new Gold Card, Trump touted it as a “Green Card Plus,” explaining that it would offer more benefits than those enjoyed by the status of a permanent resident and the current EB-5 program.

Unsurprisingly, the Gold Card was quickly met with backlash, with many criticizing what the vetting process would look like. Other critics argue that this new pathway could have adverse effects, as it could give wealthy foreign nationals with ill intent an easier way to access American citizenship.

When asked during the press conference whether wealthy Russian oligarchs could apply for the Gold Card, Trump responded, “Yeah, possibly. I know some Russian oligarchs that are very nice people.”

Lutnick explained shortly after—speaking of all applicants—“They’ll have to go through vetting, of course, to make sure they’re wonderful world-class global citizens.”

New York-based immigration attorney Scott Messinger of [Gladstein & Messinger, P.C.](#), is skeptical of this new idea. “With the EB-5 program in place, I’m not sure why someone who has five million dollars sitting around and wanted a green card wouldn’t have applied already, considering under the EB-5 program one only needed to invest \$800,000,” says Messinger. He also emphasizes the

EB-5 job creation requirement and comments that if this new program does not require job creation, “then it truly is a golden ticket for Russian oligarchs without much benefit to the country.”

Messinger additionally explains that EB-5 applicants have to establish that they obtained the funds to be invested by legal means, and not requiring this showing would open up legal status in the United States to potential criminals. Further, Messinger points out that the EB-5 program was created by Congress and cannot simply be replaced by the President without Congressional action.

Others have criticized the overall fairness of the card, arguing that it prioritizes wealthy applicants over merit-based selection and, as such, may have unintended consequences and may not appropriately address the visa pathway’s economic goals.

There are also concerns about the tax breaks Gold Card holders would have as it is proposed to offer several tax loopholes.

More details about the Gold Card visa will be unveiled in the next two weeks, according to the President. While this citizenship path is not the only one of its kind—many countries, including Canada, the UK, the Netherlands, and others, have similar programs in place—the new Gold Card would be the most expensive in the world.

Scott Messinger
Gladstein & Messinger, P.C.
+1 718-793-7800

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