



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 5, 2022

**Contact:** Assefash Makonnen, African Communities Together, [assefash@africans.us](mailto:assefash@africans.us)

## **AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS CELEBRATE WIN IN DIVERSITY VISA LAWSUIT**

*Rule slashed applications for legal migration slots, especially from Africa*

**Washington, D.C.-** [African Communities Together \(ACT\)](#), an advocacy organization for immigrants from Africa, cheered a ruling in the lawsuit *E.B. v. Department of State* ([link to case background](#)) which ACT organized. The decision will reopen applications to the Diversity Visa (DV) program to millions of aspiring immigrants around the world, particularly immigrants from Africa.

The ruling ([linked here](#)) overturns one of the most significant barriers to legal migration erected by the Trump Administration. In 2019, the Department of State began requiring applicants to submit a passport when entering the lottery that allocates application slots for the DV program. After implementation of the passport requirement, DV program applications plummeted worldwide, from 14.7 million to 6.7 million. DV program applications from African countries plummeted by a staggering 62%. Unlike other Trump-era policies, the Biden Administration continued to defend the “passport rule” in court.

*E.B.* was filed in 2019 by four anonymous plaintiffs: an Ethiopian national and an Ivorian national who had previously applied to the DV program but were barred by the passport rule, and their U.S.-citizen siblings. Plaintiffs were represented by the [Georgetown Law Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection \(ICAP\)](#), and [Friedman Kaplan Seiler & Adelman LLP](#).

The decision knocks down a major application barrier for millions of aspiring American citizens, particularly those from poorer countries, where passports may be in limited supply and procuring a passport can be prohibitively difficult. Applicants to the next lottery for DV application slots in October 2022, will not be required to submit a passport until they know that they have won a chance in the lottery to submit a full application.

“This decision is a victory for 8 million people from around the world who were blocked and discouraged from pursuing legal migration to the United States by the passport rule,” said **Amaha Kassa, Executive Director of African Communities Together**. “Especially for African immigrants, who are the biggest beneficiaries of the DV program and who put the ‘diversity’ into ‘Diversity Visa.’ We urge the Biden administration to back away from this Trump-era policy and restore the Diversity Visa program to its original intent and purpose.”

“This win represents a huge step forward for so many of us. Back home, I have many relatives who were stripped of their chance to come to the U.S. Now that this requirement has been removed, my hope of being reunited with my family members has been revived.” - **Anonymous Plaintiff (A.K.)**

##

*African Communities Together is an organization of African immigrants fighting for civil rights, opportunity, and a better life for African families in the U.S. and worldwide. ACT connects African immigrants to critical services, helps Africans develop as leaders, and organizes African immigrant communities on the issues that matter.*