

# Football's lesson for the H-1B policy

In recent years, two highly rated college quarterbacks were picked in the first round of the NFL draft and performed so poorly that their teams got rid of them. The Giants released Daniel Jones without getting any compensation and the Browns traded Baker Mayfield for just a fifth-round draft pick. These teams were convinced that their quarterbacks were flops and not talented enough to deserve roster spots.

But to many people's surprise, these quarterbacks went to new teams and had success. Daniel Jones, in his first year with the Colts, is undefeated and leads a high-powered offense that has scored more points per game than every other NFL team except the Baltimore Ravens, who are lucky enough to have two-time MVP Lamar Jackson as its quarterback. Mayfield eventually ended up with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. In each of the past two seasons with the Buccaneers, he passed for over 4,000 yards and received

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a high quarterback rating. So why did these quarterbacks fail with their first NFL teams and succeed with their current team? The answer is team production. A quarterback is only one player on the offense. A quarterback needs blockers to protect him, a running back to take pressure off the passing game, receivers to catch the thrown ball and coaches to put the offense in a position to take advantage of favorable matchups. If the most talented quarterback in the league is surrounded by inferior offensive players and coaches, he will only perform at a low level. He may throw perfect passes that are dropped by inept receivers. He may never get time to throw the ball because his linemen cannot stop the defense's pass rush.

In contrast, when the superstar

quarterback is surrounded by talented teammates and coaches, he will excel. He will throw a long pass that is a little bit off the mark but still caught by an able receiver. A superior offensive line will give the quarterback more time to throw the ball, which enables receivers to get open and offers the opportunity for the quarterback to complete an easy pass to an open receiver.

Football teaches us the lesson that workers are more productive if they are surrounded by other talented workers. These other talented employees make their workmates more productive – just as superstar receivers make quarterbacks more productive by catching passes that others might miss.

Given the lesson that football teaches us, a lesson that seems obvious to everyone who hears it, Donald Trump's proposed policy on H-1B visas is disappointing. H-1B visas allow highly skilled workers to take jobs in the United

States. Trump wants to charge companies \$100,000 for each H-1B visa that enables a company to hire a highly skilled foreign worker.

Trump's policy will hurt the economy if it discourages companies from hiring high skilled foreign workers and bringing them to the United States to work. If these skilled workers are not in the U.S., then our own workers will be unable to have their own productivity enhanced by working with these skilled foreigners. Just as the quarterback benefits from a skilled receiver, IT workers gain from skilled foreign workers who make them more productive.

Actually, there is a good chance that Trump's policy will be more harmful to the U.S. economy than I let on. Besides just limiting the chances for more productive teamwork (as I just discussed), Trump's policy may also make it too expensive for tech companies to bring the skilled workers

they need to the U.S. These tech companies may respond by moving their operations to countries like India that have the skilled workers they need. In this case, Trump's policy would have backfired. He hoped his \$100,000 visa charge would make companies want to hire more American workers. He did not count on the company moving its operations abroad, which would leave fewer jobs for Americans.

I should qualify my argument – at least a bit. There is a chance that Trump's \$100,000 charge for visas will help the U.S. economy. This scenario would occur if companies were able to bring in more skilled workers by paying the \$100,000 charge than they can currently bring in under the quota system that severely restricts the number of foreigners who can get H-1B visas. We will see how it all plays out.

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