



## ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES

### 1.1 USCIS UPDATES

USCIS has been continuing its efforts to streamline its case processing. Now a 10% fee increase could be imminent. Green Cards and Work Permits received some face-lifts.

### 1.2 CONSULAR ISSUES

Thus far, the implementation of new electronic Form DS-160 to replace the legacy DS-156/157/158 forms and its new classification-based tiered fee system were the State Department's big moves to cause headlines this year.

### 1.3 BUSINESS CORNER

Business Visa Issues haven't really stood out thus far this year. The Labor Department has been implementing increased revised measures in its online portal and case filing system for foreign workers.

### 1.4 Q & A ... DID YOU KNOW?

You can read more about items in this column by going to my blog and looking in the relevant subject categories. See the address below. Either browse by category, date, or search by specific key words. The blog is updated frequently.

### 1.5 ODDS AND ENDS

I'm currently working on additional content for my website and my blog, as well as some other "off-web" projects. Stay tuned for further announcements.

If you want to connect with me on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Xing, please feel free to send a request.

A newsletter on all things Immigration-related.  
by Steven A. Culbreath, Esq., *Your Immigration and Business Lawyer*



Dear Reader,

Wishing everyone a Happy 4th July, Independence Day.

### 2010 Half a year gone already...

It's hard to believe how quickly this year has gone by. This year is already half over already. All in all, for me and my family it's been a good first six months.

My daughter, Caroline, has been doing very well in school (now entering 5th grade) and has recently been accepted at EVERTON-Florida Soccer Club Academy in their U-11 girls division.

My Masonic involvement this year has increased dramatically, serving my home lodge as its Junior Warden. My work and involvement with our Tampa Bay Hyperbaric Center for Children continues as well.

Professionally, I have continued and enjoyed the challenges and rewards of my work, and helping clients achieve their objectives. As in 2009, economic challenges have challenged many clients and their businesses.

Cases thus far this year have been very interesting and of a wide variety, covering many different businesses, and individuals with varying skill-sets, ranging from hair stylists, to engineers, to commercial shippers, to solar power / photovoltaics, freight handling, IT development, online publishing, industrial machinery and food processing, real estate develop-

ment, medical devices, educational professionals, academic researchers, professional skaters,... just to list a few. In addition, of course, I've been privileged to serve many clients with their personal immigration needs, bringing married couples together, bringing families together, processing citizenship applications, etc.

### Now is a good time to reflect...

Being mid-year, this is a good time to examine your own circumstances, be they business or personal. On the business front, examine your business' performance thus far. How is the business performing? is it on task? is it on track? what's working? what's not working? Do NOT wait until 2-3 months before any renewal or extension papers need to be filed to look at your business. A suffering, struggling business is a difficult foundation on which to base a new visa or a prolonged authorized stay in the U.S. I would be happy to meet with you and examine your business and possibly help you identify and address areas of concern or areas needing improvement. Do not wait for a government official to make an adverse call against you, or you could find yourself in trouble and possibly packing... You should evaluate where your business is headed and how it's doing at least quarterly, if not monthly. On the personal side of things, if you have any changes in personal circumstances, employment changes, family changes, relationship changes, etc. these could have immigration conse-

quences (good or bad) and should be addressed and dealt with sooner rather than later. Given that government filing fees are on the rise (U.S. State Department fees have already risen as of early June), you may want to expedite some anticipated immigration filings and not delay them, in an effort to file them before the new fees become effective.

#### **While you're thinking, also consider this...**

Also, while most all of my professional practice is dedicated to matters of U.S. immigration law, I do help my clients with other issues and matters, as they arise, and where necessary, provide referrals to other qualified professionals.

While you may have taken care of your tax matters and estate planning matters in your home country, DO be mindful that you need to be equally diligent in taking care of these in the United States as well, keeping in mind that State and Federal laws are involved. These issues are also relevant in the areas of financial planning and managing your real estate assets.

While examining your business or personal circumstances, if you discover you may need assistance tackling issues, please let me know. I offer my immigration clients several other services, including simple estate planning, and business planning and consulting, among others.

#### **Another online resource for you in the making.**

For prospective clients who are not familiar with my immigration practice and expertise, I have instituted a new website, essentially an immigration practice profile. [www.immigrationlawtampabay.com](http://www.immigrationlawtampabay.com)

Have a look, share the link, spread the word (if you want to). In

the coming weeks, I will be adding more content to it, to provide those seeking clear, no nonsense information about U.S. Immigration Law a easy-to-use (and read) resource.

#### **Just a SKYPE-chat away, when an in-person meet won't do...**

Although my office is in downtown St. Petersburg, and I continue offering to meet with actual or prospective clients for consultations anywhere in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee and Sarasota counties, I have now been doing online SKYPE-chats with several clients, with great success and efficiency. The ability to obtain real-time, dialogue and simultaneous file transfer has made communication very effective for both me and the client. To facilitate scheduling, please email me to set up a specific time for the SKYPE-chat.

#### **Annual Green Card Lottery (DV-2012) to start again in Fall.**

As in years past, the U.S. State Department will be opening the online 'doors' later this fall for about 60 days, to receive lottery entries for the Fiscal Year 2012 (which starts October 1, 2011).

During the 2-month period, nationals of qualified countries who meet certain criteria, may submit their entries for a Green Card. While there is no official filing fee for participation in the lottery (PLEASE WATCH OUT FOR FRAUDULENT ONLINE SCHEMES!), as a matter of convenience to clients, I do offer to handle the lottery entry for a nominal fee of \$100 per entry. (Married couples filing 2 separate entries are charged \$150)

More importantly, if and when notified as a potential winner, the lottery participant should definitely hire the services of a qualified immigration lawyer to handle the actual

application process for the Immigrant Visa and/or Green Card, which will depend on where the Applicant is residing (inside or outside the U.S.).

Please also remember, that a winning participant *must* pay additional government filing fees (and legal fees if a lawyer is assisting) to process their claim and obtain permanent residence.

#### **Safe Summer Travels Wherever you may go...**

If you have plans to travel this summer, have a great time, stay safe, and have a good return!

Referrals and testimonials are the most significant compliment you can give. It's the driving force behind my practice. I welcome your referrals, and will treat those referrals with utmost care and courtesy.

Sincerely Yours,



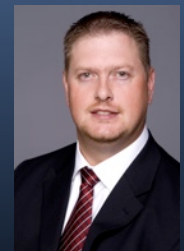
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The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisements. Before you decide, ask me to send you free written information about my qualifications and experience.