



Joseph Law Firm^{PC}

Immigration Law Specialists

Newsletter

October/November 2016

Immigration News

Merry Christmas? USCIS Filing Fees Set to Go Up During Holidays

Contributed by Aaron Hall, Partner

On December 23, 2016, the new fee schedule for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) application and petition filing fees will go into effect. Family-based petitions, employment-based petitions, and naturalization applications will all be affected. For example, the I-130 Petition for an Alien Relative will go up from \$420 to \$535. The I-129 Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker will go up from \$325 to \$460 and the N-400 Application for Naturalization will go up from \$595 to \$640. Waiver applications will see some of the more dramatic increases, with I-601 waivers set to go up from \$585 to \$930 (though I-601A waivers will only go up to \$630).

The Truth About Border Security and Detention

Contributed by Courtney Butler, Associate Attorney

In an election season fraught with claims of building a wall along the Mexican border and making Mexico pay for it, the importance of an effective border security plan that serves national security concerns but also ensures due process rights for all becomes even more apparent. The truth about border security and detention is not necessarily what the political dialogue would lead one to believe.

Over the last 15 years, the demographics of border crossers have changed significantly. Instead of Mexicans and single adults attempting to cross the border without authorization, more families and unaccompanied children are arriving in the United States in an attempt to flee violence and poverty in Central America. For the first time in 2014 and again in 2016, Central Americans apprehended at the southern border outnumbered Mexicans. In fiscal year 2016, total border apprehensions increased over fiscal year 2015, but decreased from fiscal years 2014 and 2013. Border apprehensions decreased significantly from the 1980s through 2008, thus indicating a lower number of attempts to cross the border illegally.

The southern border of the United States is more secure now than ever before. Although Donald Trump claims that the Obama administration has revived a practice known as “catch and release,” where those apprehended at the border are released rather than detained while their immigration proceedings progress, this practice actually ended in 2006. In fact, under the Obama administration, the Department of Homeland Security has dramatically increased the use of detention and fast-track removal procedures. Since the end of “catch and release,” there have been record-high levels of immigration detention; the average number of people detained for immigration purposes has increased 74%. This is especially significant in light of the fact that fewer people have attempted to enter the United States illegally over the past decade.

Not only has the number of those detained increased, but accelerated deportations, including such processes as “expedited removal” and “reinstatement of removal,” give border officials the authority to detain and remove a foreign national before he or she has the opportunity to see an immigration judge. The use of these processes has increased 62% since 2006. Few foreign nationals are able to obtain legal counsel when subject to these fast-track procedures, and their inability to see a judge brings due process concerns to the forefront.

With illegal immigration at an all-time low, and considering the due process concerns of prolonged detention and/or fast-track deportations, border security is not the concern that many politicians are making it out to be during this election cycle.



Firm News—Our New Team Members

Claudia P. Hurtado-Myers, Associate Attorney in Edwards Office

Claudia received her undergraduate degree in Sociology with a concentration in Social Welfare and Minority Studies from the University of North Carolina at Asheville and her Juris Doctor with honors from North Carolina Central University School of Law. Prior to immigrating to the United States with her family in the early 1980's, Claudia lived in Columbia, South America. In addition to practicing law, Claudia has worked as a Hispanic community leader. Among several things, she helped organize "Dia de los Reyes" with Diamante, Inc., the largest Latino/a Arts and Culture organization in North Carolina. Claudia is passionate about helping immigrants of all walks of life. Since relocating to Colorado from North Carolina, Claudia is excited to call Vail her home. She will be working out of the Firm's Edwards office location and is bilingual in English and Spanish. In her free time, Claudia enjoys camping, hiking, snowshoeing, and loves all things positive.



Courtney Sommers, Associate Attorney

Attorney Courtney D. Sommer is excited to join Joseph Law Firm, P.C. to pursue her passion for helping individuals address immigration issues, reunify families, and provide legal services that are essential to the successful navigation of immigration law. Courtney is a graduate of Chicago-Kent College of Law in Chicago, Illinois and the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri. At Chicago-Kent, Courtney clerked in the immigration legal clinic, providing legal assistance with immigration matters. She is also a volunteer attorney with the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network. Prior to joining Joseph Law Firm, Courtney was an associate with a personal injury firm, where her diligence and compassion toward her clients created lasting relationships, and her clients have thanked her personally for the care that she takes with their needs. Courtney looks forward to serving the clients of Joseph Law Firm in the same manner and acting as an advocate for their legal needs. Courtney is bilingual in English and Spanish.



Siena Mann, Paralegal in Colorado Springs Office

Siena graduated from Haverford College in 2014 with a BA Honors in Spanish Literature, Anthropology and Environmental Studies. While at Haverford College, Siena studied abroad in Esteli, Nicaragua and Salamanca, Spain. Prior to joining Joseph Law Firm P.C., Siena worked at Casa de los Amigos, A.C., in Mexico City on issues of immigration and human rights. She also worked at Annunciation House, a non-profit organization in El Paso, Texas, as a case manager for immigrants and refugees. Siena will be working out of the Firm's Colorado Springs office location. She is bilingual in English and Spanish. In addition to her passion for social justice issues and Latin American politics, Siena loves spending time outdoors, playing soccer, dancing and meeting new people.



Mariela Galvan, Client Service Coordinator

Mariela is originally from Zacatecas, Mexico. Prior to joining Joseph Law Firm PC, Mariela obtained a degree in Journalism and interned for Azteca America Colorado in the Hispanic Outreach program. There she provided information about jobs, community events and ways to bring the Hispanic community together. Following her internship, Mariela spent several years as a bilingual recruiter for a staffing agency. Since joining Joseph Law Firm, P.C., Mariela has been working as the Firm's Client Service Coordinator. She works directly with clients offering them high quality customer service. Mariela is bilingual in English and Spanish. In her free time she enjoys volunteering to the Children's Hospital, reading, dancing, and spending time with her family.



12203 East Second Avenue
Aurora, CO. 80011

www.immigrationissues.com

Aurora
303-297-9171

Colorado Springs
719-434-5660

Edwards
970-446-7884