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## January 2015 Barnett Law Group Breaking News

### **U.S. Customs and Border Protection Department of Homeland Security**

Customs and Border Protection, Houston Field Office will establish a pilot program to begin accepting requests, via email, to review issues with electronic I-94s that may contain erroneous information such as an incorrect "admitted until" date, incorrect biographical information and/or incorrect classes of admission. This program will end on January 15, 2016. Check your current I-94 at <https://i94.cbpdhs.gov> and if incorrect contact our office.

### **USCIS Houston Field Offices & Service Center News**

Do not be surprised if you receive a naturalization/residency interview scheduled for 5:05 PM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays. Keep your fingers crossed that USCIS doesn't schedule interviews on Saturday, as past. Do not be alarmed by strange reminder notices to renew your DACA or to bring certain documents to your interview.

### **Immigration Innovation Act Would Help Economy**

A bipartisan team of senators lent a helping hand to the tech sector on January 13, 2015 to reform the immigration system for high-skilled workers. The Immigration Innovation Act provides critical reforms needed in the area of high-skilled immigration. Among the bill's provisions are the following: increases the H-1B cap from 65,000 to 115,000 and allows the cap to go up (but not above 195,000) or down (but not below 115,000), depending on actual market demand; removes the existing 20,000 cap on the U.S. advanced degree exemption for H-1Bs; authorizes employment for dependent spouses of H-1B visa holders; recognizes that foreign students at U.S. colleges and universities have "dual intent" so they aren't penalized for wanting to stay in the U.S. after graduation; recaptures green card numbers that were approved by Congress in previous years but were not used, and continues to do so going forward; exempts dependents of employment-based immigrant visa recipients, U.S. STEM advanced degree holders, person with extraordinary ability, and outstanding professors and researchers from the employment-based green card cap; eliminates annual per-country limits for employment-based visa petitioners and adjusts per-country caps for family-based immigrant visas; establishes a grant program using funds from new fees added to H-1Bs and employment-based green cards to promote STEM education and worker retraining. With H-1B opening date to file on April 1, 2015 this act would provide much-needed relief.

### **House votes to undo Obama Immigration Policies**

In an assault on one of President Barack Obama's top domestic priorities, House Republicans approved measures that would overturn his immigration actions and remove protections for immigrants brought illegally to the country as children. Despite a White House veto threat, Republicans attached language blocking Obama's immigration initiatives to legislation providing nearly \$40 billion to finance the Homeland Security Department through the rest of the budget year. The House voted 237-190 to approve one amendment to undo executive actions that Obama announced in November to provide temporary deportation relief to some 4 million immigrants in the country illegally. A second amendment would delete Obama's 2012 policy that's granted work permits and stays of deportation to more than 600,000 immigrants who arrived in the U.S. illegally as children. That measure passed more narrowly, 218-209, as more than two dozen Republicans joined Democrats in opposition. Watch for developments in effect on the expanded DACA program due to begin February 19 and DAPA program due May 20, 2015.

*If you are interested in learning more about these new developments, please contact our firm at (713) 980-9939 or [psb@barnett-lawgroup.com](mailto:psb@barnett-lawgroup.com). Don't delay to renew DACA and tell your friends who have not yet applied to contact our firm!*