



Everyone here at the Barnett Law Group wish everyone a great July!

USCIS Gets A New Director - Leon Rodriguez was born in Brooklyn, New York and grew up in Miami was sworn as the new director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on July 9th. Mr. Rodriguez is an attorney from the North-Eastern United States with a long work history with the Department of Justice and as a federal prosecutor. Before his appointment as USCIS director he was director of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human Services, a position he held from 2011 to 2014. Mr. Rodriguez was quoted as saying "This is both an exciting and challenging time for USCIS," Rodriguez said. "Our role in administering our nation's immigration and naturalization laws has never been more important. I look forward to working with the entire USCIS family, including our partners and constituents, to ensure that our mission is carried out with fairness and integrity."

Crisis at the Border – According to a report released by the Congressional Research Service, there were 47,017 apprehensions at the border during the first eight months of the 2014 fiscal year. Unaccompanied minors comprised only 25% of those emigrating from Mexico, while 73% of those who emigrated from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras were unaccompanied minors. In 2008 a law was passed that ensured unaccompanied minors from countries besides Mexico an immigration judge. The 2008 law does not however apply to Mexican children, who are subject to a separate procedure usually consisting of being screened by Border Patrol agents, without automatic access to an immigration judge. Ordinarily those unaccompanied minors from Mexico are deported quickly. To combat the influx of people at the southern border Customs and Border Protection announced the immediate deployment of 150 additional Border Patrol agents to the Rio Grande Valley, TX, where the largest number of unaccompanied minors are arriving.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Renewals - The Department of Homeland Security has announced the new process for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) renewal. As of April 2014 over 560,000 individuals have received DACA. However, this number only accounts for less than ½ of the possible DACA eligible individuals. The first DACA approvals will begin to expire in September 2014. To avoid a lapse in the period of deferral and employment authorization, individuals must file renewal requests before the expiration of their current period of DACA. USCIS encourages requestors to submit their renewal requests between 120 days (four months) and no more than 150 days before their current period of deferred action expires. Individuals may request DACA renewal if they continue to meet the initial criteria and these additional requirements: (1) did not depart the United States on or after August 15, 2012, without advance parole; (2) have continuously resided in the United States since they submitted their most recent approved DACA request; and (3) have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor or three or more misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety. The renewal process begins by filing the new version of Form I-821D "Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals," Form I-765 "Application for Employment Authorization," and the I-765 Worksheet. There is a filing and biometrics (fingerprints and photo) fee associated with DACA totaling \$465. As with an initial request, USCIS will conduct a background check when processing DACA renewals. Sometimes when our office consults applicants for DACA or DACA renewal status, we find that other immigration options are available, such as permanent residence.

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