



June 2012 Barnett Law Group Breaking News

DHS Expands STEM Degrees for Student Work Cards

In an effort to attract more international students to study in the U.S., the DHS has added more designated degrees in areas including pharmaceutical sciences, econometrics, and quantitative economics, among many others, which allow work authorization cards for up to 27 months for qualifying U.S. employers.

June 1, 2012 H-1B Cap Count

USCIS updated its count of FY2013 cap-subject H-1B petitions & advanced degree cap-exempt petitions received. As of 06/01/12, nearly 55,600 H-1B cap-subject petitions (of 65,000) were received. Additionally, USCIS has received 18,700 H-1B petitions (of 20,000 available) for aliens with advanced degrees.

Delay in Receipt Notices for I-129 petitions

Due to the high number of recently filed I-129 petitions with USCIS, customers may experience a longer than usual period of time to receive a receipt notice from USCIS. Usually, customers can expect to receive their receipt notice within 30 days of delivery confirmation. However, due to an unexpectedly high volume of I-129 petitions, it may be an additional two to four weeks before customers receive a receipt notice.

Form I-601 Centralized Filing

Beginning June 4, 2012, individuals abroad who have applied for certain visas and have been found ineligible by a U.S. Consular Officer, will be able to mail requests to waive certain grounds of inadmissibility directly to a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Lockbox facility. This change affects where individuals abroad, who have been found inadmissible for an immigrant visa or a nonimmigrant K or V visa, must send their waiver applications. **This change has nothing to do with the proposed stateside processing of I-601 waivers for those applicants who are currently in the U.S. That process is not in place yet.**

USCIS Electronic Immigration System (USCIS ELIS)

On May 22 the USCIS launched its first stage of electronic filing for certain applicants to electronically file to change or extend their nonimmigrant status. Please visit www.uscis.gov/uscis-elis for a video.

Immigrant of the Month

Julia M. (not her real name) was granted U.S. Lawful Permanent Residency in May 2012 -- **25 years** after her first attempt. Ms. M has lived in the US since the 1980's, has US citizen children (one serving the US Army), and has a home and business. She applied through Amnesty, LIFE, and Parole in Place for Military Immediate Relatives but was unsuccessful. Finally, we found an admission document in her records from 2003 which allowed her to adjust her status in the US. Her son should be home this summer from his latest tour of duty and the entire family will celebrate its latest US resident.

If you are interested in learning more about these new developments, please contact our firm at (713) 980-9939 or psb@barnett-lawgroup.com.