



March 2013 Barnett Law Group Breaking News

USCIS Anticipates H-1B Visa Lottery USCIS believes that more than the allotted 65,000 H-1B visas will be reached in the first week of filing from April 1 to April 5, 2013. If so, a lottery system will be used to randomly select the number of petitions required to reach the numerical limit. While this is a sign of our recovering economy it is also an indication of why immigration reform is needed to increase work visas for talented foreign workers.

Budget Cuts Lead ICE to Release Immigrants from Detention Along with every other government agency, on March 1, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials had to begin making mandatory cuts to their budget as a result of sequestration. ICE's choice to shift some of its detainees from expensive detention facilities to non-detention alternatives has led Congress to question and review this decision. CBP (Customs & Border Protection) inspections may also be impacted if overtime is reduced leading to long delays at airport inspections.

A Delicate Balancing Act Increasing Employment Visas Without Reducing Family Visas As Congress struggles with immigration reform much emphasis has been placed on how foreign entrepreneurs start businesses and create jobs for U.S. workers. Many are calling for an increase in both nonimmigrant as well as immigrant work visas to attract these foreign nationals to the U.S. But what to do about the visa quota? Congress currently allocates 226,000 family immigrant visas and 140,000 employment immigrant visas annually. One idea proposed has been to eliminate immigrant visas for adult married children of U.S. citizens and for brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens. There is already a years' long wait for these visas. Family unity has been the goal of U.S. immigration law since the 1952 Act. A shift toward an employment-based immigration system would be a blow to the intrinsic value of the family unit.

CBP Tour of IAH Facility On March 15, I had the chance to tour Primary, Secondary, and Customs inspections facility at Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport. IAH is one of the busiest airports in the country and hosts many international visitors each year. The inspectors work long hours juggling the needs of primary inspections and filling in with both soft and hard secondary. Most of the time the lines move fast but those who have issues they are assigned to wait in a secondary inspection room while their immigration admission is decided. I learned that besides the information displayed on their databases inspectors are also trained to recognize body and facial queues to develop a sixth sense about applicants for admission.

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