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## November 2012 Barnett Law Group Breaking News

*Happy Thanksgiving from The Barnett Law Group! We are thankful for the freedoms our country provides to all our citizens and immigrants!*

**Immigration Reform in the Next Congress** - Members of both parties have expressed hope for an immigration reform bill in the new Congress. While the makeup of the two houses of Congress was unaffected by the Presidential election, the Republican Party has announced that it received a clear message from Latino voters that immigration reform is a top agenda item. Florida's Senator Marco Rubio's version of the Dream Act, known as Achieve, which was floated last summer before President Obama's Executive Order granting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, has re-emerged. The Achieve Act offers undocumented children nonimmigrant visas to attend school and work in the U.S. and after a decade or so, puts them on a regular pathway towards Permanent Residence. It will be interesting to see how Congress resolves U.S. Immigration Reform.

**Visa Office Issues Guidance on Monthly Determination of Employment Preference Visa Cut-Off Dates** - One of the most pressing issues in Immigration reform is the need to move the immigrant visa wait queue. It is literally backed up years. While there are only 40,040 visas available in each of the top three employment visa categories, the demand has steadily risen to outstrip availability since 2005. As of Jan. 2012 the EB-2 category for Advanced Degree holders was 46,775 with the largest country demands for China and India. For EB-3, Professional and Skilled Workers, the demand was 65,600. Without either more visa numbers or a different allocation system, foreign nationals waiting for employment immigrant visas face long wait times.

**Pentagon Reopens Program Allowing Immigrants With Special Skills to enlist in the Armed Forces** - 1500 recruits a year present on temporary visas may be allowed to enlist in the Army if they have special language or medical skills. And, as a member of the military, the path to naturalization as a US citizen can be accomplished often by the end of basic training. The program known as "Mavni" is not open to undocumented immigrants and the first round has already filled with the Army turning away thousands of people.

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).