



Giselle Carson

To the Best New Year!

The new year brings renewed energy and optimism that improvements will be made to U.S. immigration laws and processes. Although the passage of a full comprehensive immigration reform bill is highly unlikely, the 114th Congress is expected to provide much needed reform in targeted areas.

I hope this year brings you, your family and company peace, success, health, happiness, prosperity and serenity. On behalf of Marks Gray, I thank you for your tremendous support in 2014 and look forward to providing you with the most important and relevant information regarding immigration policy throughout the year.

Cheerfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'G Carson'.

The February Visa Bulletin is Released

The bulletin shows a slight forward movement in all visa preference categories and a potential monthly movement for family and employment categories through May 2015.

In February, the priority date for EB-3 China will be more than 17 months ahead of EB-2 China which could lead to a significant number of filings for EB-3 China and might require correction later in the fiscal year. EB-2 India will be at Sept. 1, 2005 and is expected to advance 4 to 6 months in the



coming months. To read the entire bulletin, click [here](#)



Will the President's Executive Action have an Impact on Priority Dates?

At this time, the President's executive action is not expected to have a significant impact on the priority date cut-off movement. The President outlined broad plans for modernization and pre-registration of the adjustment of status (AOS) applicants whose priority dates are not current. His plan is limited to pre-registration filings with the USCIS and would not render the applicants eligible for an immediate "green card." The plan proposes to "Modernize the Employment-Based Immigrant Visa System" and develop systems to ensure that all available immigrant visa numbers are used rather than having some numbers not used which, unfortunately, has been the case for many years.

Executive Action is under Attack!

Seventeen states including; Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin have filed suit in federal court challenging the constitutionality of the President's executive action.

The main issues of the dispute are the constitutionality over the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals ("DACA") and Deferred Action for Parental Accountability ("DAPA") programs. The programs allow certain undocumented young adults and their parents to live and work in the U.S. without fear of deportation. However, the status provided by these programs is temporary, discretionary, revocable and currently do not lead to permanent residence.

It is Time to Start Planning for New H-1B Visa Filings!

The USCIS will begin accepting H-1B petitions, that are subject to the FY2016 cap, on April 1, 2015. The demand for new H-1B visas is expected to be higher than last year, when the demand for H-1B visas exceeded their availability.



Last year, the USCIS conducted a computer-generated lottery to select FY2015 H-1B petitions for processing. The USCIS received approximately 172,500 H-1B petitions for the allotted 85,000 cap-subject H-1B spots. After the 20,000 U.S.

**It is important to note, none of the President's initiatives have been implemented and USCIS is not accepting any requests or applications at this time. Beware of anyone who offers to help you submit an application or a request for any of these proposed actions before they are available.*

advanced-degree cases were selected, approximately 152,500 cases were left in a general lottery for 65,000 spots. In order to improve the chances of selection, planning and preparation should begin now. If you or anyone you know are considering filing a new H-1B visa April 1, 2015 please contact us as soon as possible.

On a positive note, in January, a bipartisan team of Senators have re-introduced the "I-squared" legislation bill. This bill proposes to raise the H-1B cap to 115,000 and allow a flexible cap of up to 195,000 H-1B visas depending on the demand. We are following this development and will keep you informed as it progresses.

Canadian E Visa Process is made Easier



In response to demands from business leaders, the DOS recently streamlined the process to renew E visa applications for Canadians. Companies registered with the U.S. Consulate General's E-visa unit in Canada can schedule appointments for their qualifying employees within a few days. The renewal process does not require a re-submission of the entire package of information about the company, only documentation related to the qualification of the employee. The new procedures will allow easier and quicker cross-border travel of E visa

A New Year, A New You!

Best Life Tips: 10 Tips to Reboot Your Life in 2015 and Beyond...

Are you living your life in the present? Loving, connecting and enjoying every minute of it?

Seneca, a Roman Philosopher and Statesman, said "It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough and a sufficiently generous amount has

been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested. But when it is wasted in heedless luxury and spent on no good activity, we are forced at last by death's final constraint to realize that it has passed away before we knew it was passing. So it is: we are not given a short life but we make it short, and we are not ill-supplied but wasteful of it... Life is long if you know how to use it." Click [here](#) to continue reading steps to your best new year!



Mexicans can now obtain copies of their Birth Certificates in the U.S.

To obtain certified copies of their birth certificates, Mexican nationals should visit the nearest Mexican consulate in the U.S. They will need to present an official proof of identity, fill out an application and pay a fee of \$13 per certified copy, and, if they have it, provide their Clave Única de Registro de Población (CURP). This is a tremendous benefit to the millions of Mexican citizens living in the U.S. that might need copies of their birth certificates to obtain work permits, driver's licenses and other benefits. Until now, Mexican nationals had to apply to obtain these certificates in Mexico.



holders. For more information, please click [here](#).

Marks Gray Pledge of Community Service

Still strong after 115 years of service

Marks Gray's mission statement includes; "[We will:] Contribute to improving the quality of life in our community through time and other resources." Our Community Service Committee developed and carried out over 50 projects designated in 2014 which directly contributed to charitable organizations locally and nationally. In 2015, the committee is planning to participate in and sponsor a variety of walks and fundraisers for charitable organizations in Jacksonville and nationwide.

New and Noteworthy

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