



**B E A C H - O S W A L D**  
Immigration Law Associates, PC

## Beach-Oswald Immigration Law Associates Newsletter

Issue 30

Washington, DC  
December, 2009

Beach-Oswald is a full-service law firm, concentrating on immigration law. We have special expertise in work visas, family based visas, visa waivers, green cards through family and employment and asylum. We have staff members who speak many different languages to assist you. Our firm is A-V rated, and we have 27 years of experience.

**We succeed when others don't!**

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## **ROOTS AND FRUITS OF GRATITUDE**

by: Danielle Beach-Oswald

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December 2009



Thanksgiving is as American as motherhood and pumpkin pie. It has a tenable history in this country, beginning with pilgrims and Presidential proclamations of various presidents since George Washington.

But roots go back much further in history. Israelites had a sacrifice to peace or thanksgiving offering which on which occasion they ate bread cakes without yeast, mixed with oil.

It was a day of thankfulness to God. Thanksgiving to God is also part of the Christian heritage. For example in England for centuries it was associated with harvest festivals thanking God for a good harvest.

In contrast we don't like an ungrateful person. Such individuals are very low on the social and moral totem pole of life.

Thanksgiving has roots! But also fruits like the harvest. Among the fruits we can mention:

1. Friendship - gratitude makes lasting friends.
2. Kindness - gratitude towards kind and generous people
3. Peace - gratitude makes for peaceful relations.
4. Health and wellness - gratitude promotes health and good feeling
5. Family - Thanksgiving strengthens family relationships even more than Christmas. The family comes together - even the office family.
6. Patriotism - Thanksgiving unites the nation in gratitude for one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Make this holiday season about gratitude, and you just might be surprised at how merry it will turn out!

## USCIS FEES MAY GO UP

USCIS had increased filing fees two years ago, and is now considering doing so again.

### Why does USCIS want to increase filing fees?

USCIS gets most of its funding from the filing fees immigrants pay when submitting benefit applications. In 2009, there was a steep decline in the number of applications submitted by immigrants that require filing fees. As a result, USCIS is \$164,000,000 short for the 2009 fiscal year. This is why USCIS wants to increase filing fees - to obtain more funds in order to prevent another shortfall in the 2010 fiscal year.

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**NEW!**

### TRIVIA QUESTIONS

1. Who was responsible for the first State Department Country Reports and when were they first used?

2. Where does the expression "sleep tight" come from?

\$25 coupon will be awarded to the first person to answer correctly.

### Is this a good idea?

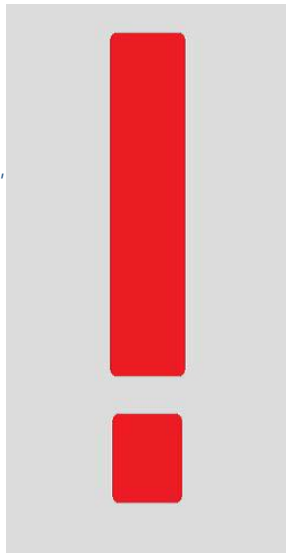
Increasing fees is not a good way for USCIS to make more money. If filing fees go up again, many immigrants will not be able to afford to file applications. The end result will be another shortfall, despite the filing fee increase, because there will be significantly less immigrants filing applications.

### Does USCIS have any other options?\_

In order to deal with its financial situation, USCIS is considering laying off employees. This, however, according to USCIS director Alejandro Mayorkas, will be a last resort.

### What should you do about this situation?\_

If you are considering filing any applications in the near future, such as an application for permanent residence or citizenship, then you must do so as soon as possible. Do not delay - come to BOILA PC where we will promptly file your applications. If you wait any longer, your green card or citizenship may end up costing you a lot more money.



### STAFF FAVORITE PLACES TO VISIT INEXPENSIVELY

- Christmas tree exhibit at the White House
- Shenandoah National Park
- Baltimore Christmas tree lighting

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY & CEDAW

The United Nations has designated **December 10th** as International Human Rights Day. This day marks the anniversary of the UN General Assembly's adopting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The United Nations was formed around the central idea of promoting peace, freedom, and equality among individuals following the horrific events of the Second World War.

Emphasizing the value and importance of human rights includes the promotion and fundamental respect for women's rights and gender equality. The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, is viewed around the world as an International Bill of Rights for women. It lays out a concrete definition for discrimination and produces measures to put an end to discrimination against women.

**Only seven countries have failed to ratify CEDAW: Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Naurau, Palau, Tonga, and the United States.** The United States is the only industrialized country that has not ratified this treaty.

The ratification of CEDAW will be up in the U.S. Senate in 2010. Please contact your senators and urge them to vote "yes" to ratify this treaty! The United States must continue to be a leader and model for the rest of the world in its promotion and respect for human rights.



### CORRECTION on "Domestic Violence Asylum Grant"

We apologize for the error in the article entitled "Domestic Violence Asylum Grant" in the 29th issue of our newsletter.

Ms. Alverado has NOT yet received her grant of asylum, but is likely to in the near future.

# AIDS DAY



On **December 1**, the world came together to celebrate World AIDS day. Hospitals and clinics around the world provided free, confidential HIV tests. HIV testing is recommended for children and adults aged 13-64.

Over 1 million people in the United States are HIV-positive, and one in five do not know they are HIV-positive. African-Americans account for over half of cases, and approximately 85% of HIV cases are transmitted through sexual contact.

For more information on World AIDS Day and HIV awareness and prevention, please visit the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>

## Department of Homeland Security Secretary Speaks for Urgent Need for Immigration Reform

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano spoke at the Center for American Progress on November 13 expressing her desire for Congress enact comprehensive immigration reform in the upcoming year. Secretary Napolitano emphasized that fixing the current system cannot come from "a single initiative of regulation," but rather sweeping reform is essential and critical to fix the faulted system. She stated that harsher penalties are needed for undocumented individuals currently in the U.S., especially at a time when the flow of undocumented persons has decreased by half since 2007. Secretary Napolitano also stressed the need for reform to address the needs of citizens with partial citizenship status, stating "no one should have to wait in line for years" to reunite with families.

Reform can only come with Congressional action on the issue. While the Obama Administration is hoping that a comprehensive immigration reform package will be introduced in 2010, Congress is the only one who can initiate and officially act on the issue. Congressional action on the issue, however, is not a guarantee in the next year. Members of Congress are focusing on other priorities, such as health care reform and addressing the needs of the economy, and several lawmakers do not believe that immigration reform is a realistic possibility. Secretary Napolitano brushed these doubts aside, however, assuring the crowd that "we can fix this."

To read more about Secretary Napolitano's speech, please

visit:

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/11/napolitano\\_vent.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/11/napolitano_vent.html).

## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN ARMENIA

In Armenia, a Jehovah's Witness was thrown into prison for refusing to perform military service. His refusal was based on his religious beliefs.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) establishes that a person has a "right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion." However, in the Bayatyan verdict, the ECHR insisted that the Jehovah's Witness' rights had not been violated.



The verdict was not based on Article 9 of the ECHR, which proved for "freedom of thought, conscience, and religion". Instead, it was based on a small section of Article 4, which discusses forced labor, and was taken out of context.

Article 4 allows for an alternative non-military service for those people who object to military service based on conscientious grounds. The Jehovah's Witnesses, however, never received an alternative to non-military service, and was imprisoned.

The only chance that this poor man now has is for the Grand Chamber of the ECHR to hear his appeal and to overturn the decision. If the Grand Chamber does not do so, the Bayatyan case will set precedence for many other similar cases to follow.

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