



President Trump's Recent Actions on Immigration and What They Mean

February 1, 2017

On January 25 and 27, President Trump signed a series of Executive Orders by which he seeks to change some of the United States government's immigration policies. We expect that he may modify or explain these initial actions, and that he may make new policy changes, but we have attempted to explain what the January actions mean for immigrants.

Ban on Entry from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Somalia

President Trump's January 27 Executive Order institutes a 90-day ban on entry to the United States for visa holders who are citizens of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Somalia. Green card holders may be able to enter the country after extra security checks at the airport. However, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) still reserved discretion to allow or deny entry to green card holders from the aforementioned countries on a case-by-case basis. Non-citizens present in the United States should not travel to these seven countries or they will be at risk of not being allowed to re-enter the U.S. on the return. Additionally, citizens of these seven countries should not travel out of the U.S. at this time.

120 Day Suspension of Our Refugee Program

The January 27 executive order places a 120-day halt on the refugee program. This means that the United States will not be accepting any refugees for resettlement until approximately the end of May, 2017, at the earliest, including refugees from Syria.

The President's Priorities for Removing Immigrants Present in the United States

Additionally, in the Executive Orders, President Trump listed the following categories of immigrants within the country, including some who currently have a lawful status, as priority for removal:

- Persons with any criminal conviction(s);
- Persons with pending criminal charges;
- Persons who have "committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense";
- Persons believed by immigration officers to pose a threat to public safety or national security;
- Persons who have a final order of removal;
- Persons who have engaged in fraud/misrepresentation in applications to government, or who have "abused" public benefits (this could include those who have used a fake Social Security Number); and
- Those who are undocumented

General Recommendations

At this time, we advise those with a lawful status or work authorization to make several copies of their documents and make sure to carry a copy of these documents with them at all times. We also recommend that people have a copy of their documents at home or somewhere easily accessible by loved ones.

We also advise that those without status, who have been in the U.S. for more than two years, start to gather documents to prove physical presence in the U.S. for at least two years (examples include entry documents, rent payments, birth certificates of U.S. citizen born children, hospital records, children's school records and medical records, and junk mail).

If you are already in an immigration court process, you still have the right to have an immigration judge hear your case and decide if you can stay in the United States.

Because the President's policy announcements did not have much detail, there is still a lot that is unknown about how these new policies will be implemented. We want to stress the importance of seeking out competent legal counsel at this time. Low-income immigrants are eligible to obtain free legal advice from our office. To schedule a consultation, please call 718-236-3000 in Brooklyn or 347-472-3500 in Queens.

Catholic Migration Services is a non-profit organization that offers free immigration, employment, and housing legal services to Brooklyn and Queens residents. Please visit our website at www.catholicmigration.org for further updates and important information about the government's immigration policies.