

Washington State Chapter

American Immigration Lawyers Association



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WASHINGTON IMMIGRATION LAWYERS WELCOME PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ACTION, CAUTION COMMUNITY AGAINST SCAMMERS

Seattle, Washington – The Washington State Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) welcomed President Obama's executive action which will offer some protections for family members and entrepreneurs in the United States until Congress acts. We urge Congress to stop any further delays and ask them to pass comprehensive immigration reform immediately.

AILA's Washington State Chapter will hold a press conference at the office of Carin Weinrich, 705 Second Avenue, Suite 1601 in Seattle, Washington at 11:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. We will provide additional information about who may benefit from this announcement, why it is legal for the President to take these actions, and how people can get legal assistance in applying for the benefit.

We have been waiting for action on immigration reform for far too long," said AILA Chapter Chair Carin Weinrich. She continued, "As immigration attorneys, we see the results of our broken system every day. In the absence of Congressional action, the President had to act. We know that many of these changes will make a real impact in our communities. This announcement could potentially help hundreds of thousands of people already living and working in Washington State."

Included in the far-ranging plan are some key items:

- Deferred Action (work authorization and relief from the threat of deportation) for the parents of U.S. citizen and lawful permanent resident children who fit the eligibility requirements.
- Expansion of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) including the removal of the current age cap of 31. DACA will now be granted for 3 years rather than 2 years.
- Ensuring that job-creating entrepreneurs have the legal means to enter and operate in the U.S.
- Allowing spouses and children of lawful permanent residents to apply for waivers of unlawful presence without leaving the U.S..
- Changing the permanent residency procedures to allow legal immigrants caught in the immigration quota backlogs to register their applications and thus begin the final step of the process.
- Directing agencies to modernize the visa system, to make optimal use of the numbers of visa available under the existing law.
- Announcement of a new border security campaign and plan.

“A major concern is to ensure that individuals are not taken advantage of by notarios and unlicensed consultants who will use this announcement to scam people. Currently, no new application forms are available and the guidelines that will determine eligibility are not yet finalized. People should seek qualified immigration attorneys for these important decisions, and not let someone ruin their chances for possible benefits under this announcement. AILA WA will be working with community organizations throughout the state to provide free community education events, and workshops to assist people in applying when the application period opens in a few months from now,” Carin Weinrich concluded.

To further assist reporters and the media in covering this important and evolving story, the Washington State AILA Chapter will be hosting Reporter’s Roundtables, both in person and live streaming on the web, on Tuesday, November 25th at 1 p.m. and on Wednesday, December 3rd at 2:30 p.m. The roundtable will be hosted at Columbia Legal Services, located at 101 Yesler Way, Suite 300, in downtown Seattle. The event will also be streamed live on the Internet. If interested in participating in one or both of these roundtable events, please email your RSVP to AILAWashingtonState@gmail.com and we will send you further information.

The Roundtable will cover important topics such as:

- Overview of announcement
- Legality of executive action by President Obama
- Who is eligible (and who is not eligible)
- Why Congressional Action is still needed
- Accessing legal services (and avoiding scams)
- Resources for more information
- Stories from potential beneficiaries

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Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that provides its members with continuing legal education, information, professional services, and expertise through its 38 chapters and over 75 national committees. AILA is an Affiliated Organization of the American Bar Association and is represented in the ABA House of Delegates.

The Washington State Chapter of AILA consists of over 450 lawyers across the state of Washington, as well as in Alaska and Montana. Our chapter serves many functions, including grassroots immigration advocacy and information sharing to members and local organizations. Member activities throughout the year include monthly meetings (CLE credit sought from WSBA), CLEs, pro bono efforts, and social activities. We meet on a regular basis with government officials and co-sponsor the Northwest Regional Immigration Conference.
<http://www.ailawa.org>