



Monday, December 10, 2007

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (DOS) AND U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES (CIS) IMPLEMENT NEW PETITION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PIMS) PROGRAM FOR ELECTRONIC VERIFICATION OF PETITION APPROVALS PRIOR TO VISA ISSUANCE

In November 2007, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (CIS) implemented the Petition Information Management System (PIMS) for electronic verification of petition approvals by U.S. Consular Officials prior to the issuance of nonimmigrant visas at U.S. Consulates abroad.

Upon CIS approval of H, L, O, P, and Q Nonimmigrant Visa Petitions, approval data and petition documents will be scanned into the PIMS database. When an applicant applies for an H, L, O, P, or Q nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. Consulate abroad, the Consular Officer will search the PIMS database to verify that the petition was approved before a visa will issue to the applicant.

The new PIMS system appears to be an upgrade from the old cable-notification system that was previously in place to ensure CIS notification of consular posts that a petition had been approved. The PIMS system is designed to reduce the occurrence of visa fraud and ensure the integrity of the nonimmigrant visa petition and application process.

While early usage of PIMS has revealed instances wherein the data had not yet been scanned into the database, resulting in delays in visa issuance, the Department of State and CIS estimate that close to 100% of petition approvals now appear in PIMS within 24-48 hours of approval. Additionally, DOS and CIS have implemented a system whereby PIMS staff can contact CIS Service Centers directly to confirm petition approval for the small percentage of cases that do not appear in the PIMS database by the time the applicant applies for his or her visa abroad.

In the event that your employee experiences delays or difficulty in visa issuance due to a Consular Officer's inability to confirm nonimmigrant visa petition approval in the new PIMS system, please contact your Tindall & Foster, P.C. immigration attorney. Your Tindall & Foster attorney will be able to assist in reporting PIMS failures and seeking the timely confirmation of petition approval by the appropriate U.S. Consulate abroad.