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March 15, 2020

**VIA EMAIL**

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Dear District Director and Field Office Director:

On behalf of the Colorado Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), the purpose of this letter is to request that the USCIS offices serving Colorado and Wyoming immediately take specific actions for the prevention and management of COVID-19.

Specifically, we ask you to:

1. Cancel all interviews, InfoPass appointments, oath ceremonies, biometrics appointments, and any other events at USCIS field offices until at least April 10, 2020, or longer, if necessary;
2. Provide guidance to stakeholders on the rescheduling of the above-referenced interviews, appointments, and oath ceremonies affected by the cancellations; and
3. Provide guidance to stakeholders on the procedures for communicating with the local field offices, handling of emergency requests, filing motions to reopen, and submitting responses to requests for evidence.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is spread by person-to-person contact and may also be spread by touching infected surfaces. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that events where more than 250 people gather be cancelled. The CDC has recommended that where vulnerable populations are present (individuals ages 60 and over, or individuals with chronic health conditions), gatherings of more than 10 people be cancelled. As of Sunday evening, the CDC is also also advising against gatherings of 50 people or more, for the next 8 weeks.

Many individual applicants, attorneys, interpreters, and staff are members of “vulnerable populations” and are at risk of severe illness or death related to COVID-19. Even those who are not members of vulnerable populations risk adverse health consequences and spreading COVID-19 to others during this global pandemic. There are currently over 230 confirmed cases in Colorado and the numbers are growing rapidly. USCIS should not place our community at increased risk by continuing to bring groups of people together on a daily basis.

On any given day, 50-100+ people, along with family members and

On any given day, 50-100+ people, along with family members and attorneys visit the USCIS Denver Field Office and Application Support Center in order to attend scheduled appointments, interviews or oath ceremonies.

Individuals who fail to appear for their interviews will have their applications for residency and naturalization denied. Further, those who are not in a lawful status in the United States are at risk of being placed in immigration removal proceedings if/when their application for residency is denied. Therefore, most individuals will continue to appear for the scheduled interviews, regardless of their health condition, in order to protect their applications for immigration benefits.

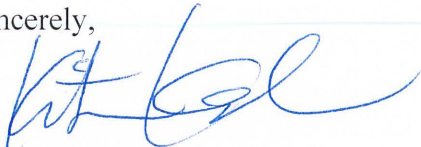
While we are aware that USCIS is willing to reschedule interviews if an individual is currently sick, according to the USCIS website, this does not go far enough. USCIS is not equipped to effectively screen for the illness. Applicants, especially those applying pro se, may not understand the process or consequences of rescheduling an appointment, or may not be willing to postpone an appointment for important benefits like permanent residency and naturalization. Additionally, COVID-19 has been shown to spread even between individuals who are asymptomatic and through surfaces. This poses a high risk of transmission in confined and shared spaces, like the waiting rooms, bathrooms, and offices at the ASC and Denver Field Office.

Adopting the above-mentioned measures will allow USCIS to address the health concerns of its stakeholders, staff, and contracted workers, as well as protect the well-being of all of our families and loved ones.

Due to the rapidly evolving nature of this epidemic and the high price of inaction to the health and safety of our communities, we respectfully request a response by Tuesday, March 16, 2020. If you have any questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact me directly.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



AILA Colorado Chapter  
Executive Committee

Kristin Knudson, Nicole Murad, Courtney Butler, Petula McShiras, Jennifer Casey, and Jennifer Smith