

EIIC NEWS



Fall 2006

Volume 9, Issue 1

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www.eiic.org

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IMMIGRATION REFORM *Where Does It Stand Now?*

On May 12, 2005 Senators McCain and Kennedy, and Representatives Kolbe, Flake and Gutierrez, joined by Senators Brownback and Lieberman, introduced *The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005*. The legislation followed months of thoughtful debate and negotiation, which resulted in bipartisan, bicameral, comprehensive border security and immigration reform.

Since May 2005, the Bill has also been known as the Hagel-Martinez Bill and most recently as the Reid-Kennedy Bill. The Senate passed a version of the bill known as S2611 (a.k.a. Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006) on May 25, 2006.

However, in stark contrast, the House of Congress has passed its own immigration bill which varies drastically from its counterpart in the Senate. Where that leaves the millions of immigrants waiting for change is unclear. What is clear is that there are many reasons for them to be here, including backlogs in the current immigration processes e.g. if you had a US citizen relative, a brother or sister, petition for you to come to America and be your sponsor, the current wait time is 10 to 12 years.

Current international events have taken over the headlines over the summer of 2006 and there seems little chance of compromise between the House Republican majority and the Senate. Both bills address national security and include provisions to increase border security. However, one of the major obstacles facing the House Republicans is the inclusion in the Senate Bill of a Guest

Worker Program which is viewed by them as amnesty and rewarding illegal behaviour

Also clear is that despite gaining enormous public attention and support, any bill revising current Immigration Law must be agreed on by both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

We have been there from the beginning of

the most recent Lobby effort pledging our support for immigration reform and were proud to dig out some of our old IIRM friends and posters to be part of the March 8, 2006 rally in Washington DC. The ILIR has been set up to lobby the US government on behalf of the estimated 50,000 undocumented Irish in the US.

What can you do – the ILIR have gathered enormous support for this issue and they are keeping the pressure up. Log onto their website at www.ilir.org.



Sean Benson and Mae O'Driscoll
in DC March 8, 2006.

EMERALD ISLE IMMIGRATION CENTER SOCIAL SERVICES

EIIC added to their staffing ranks in June 2006 with the addition of Kara Egan as a full-time Social Worker. Kara is primarily based in Woodside but will be present in our Woodlawn office on an as needed basis and is currently working on the further development of all our Social Services and Programs. Kara will join Maire Kerins our Existing Seniors Program Coordinator and oversee all our Senior programs in Woodside and Woodlawn and will work more specifically on the creation of a Drug and Alcohol abuse treatment and referral program.

J1 – SUMMER STUDENTS

Each year we see an influx of Irish students and this year was no different! In fact we hired Orla Kelly (Blackrock, Co. Cork) a J1 student herself for the summer of 2006. Orla worked from both Woodlawn and Woodside offices. One of the biggest challenges facing the summer student population as always is accommodation and jobs, so Orla was kept very busy. We wish her luck with her future studies at UCG!

DRIVERS LICENSES

Applying for a New York State Drivers License has become increasingly difficulty for the undocumented population in New York. The current position is that if you currently have a NYS Drivers License, or are applying for one for the first time, the Department of Motor Vehicles will not process an application that is not accompanied by a valid Social Security Card. (Note: A Social Security Number by itself is not enough, the DMV MUST see the card) Even if you have previously applied for and received a Drivers License, but did not at that time show a Valid Social Security Card, you will not be able to renew the license without one. The NY State DMV will only issue a license or state ID to NYS residents with valid immigration status lasting for one year or more with six months or more remaining.

If you are not eligible for a Social Security Number (SSN), you must get a letter or form SSA L676 from the Social Security Administration (SSA) stating this. However, you must also present documentation from the USCIS which shows why you are not entitled to a SSN. This applies mainly to people who are allowed to be legally present in the US for long periods of time, but are not entitled to work or to apply for a SSN. Examples would be spouses or children of H1B Visa Holders. This does not apply to people here on tourist visas or Visa Waivers, since tourists are allowed to drive on their Drivers License from their home country. Unless the person becomes a NYS resident, the DMV is of the view that they do not need a NYS License, and so will not entertain any Drivers License applications from this group that are not accompanied by valid SS Cards.

International Driving Permits are not substitutes for NYS Drivers Licenses; rather an IDP merely confirms that the IDP holder has a valid license in their home country. They mean nothing without the accompanying foreign license. They cannot be obtained in the US; instead they can be obtained from organizations abroad like the Automobile Association (AA), and are only valid for one year. They are NOT issued by the DMV. The New York State Supreme Court ruled in July of this year that the New York Department of Motor Vehicles was in fact legally allowed to insist on seeing an applicant's Social Security Card before the issuance of a Drivers License, a practice they had begun in 2004. This was a reversal of the 2005 decision of the Manhattan Court which said that the DMV went beyond its authority in utilizing this practice. Because that decision was immediately appealed to the higher Court, the DMV had continued with the practice of Social Security number verification, leaving many of those without status ineligible to apply for or to renew Drivers Licenses in New York State.

The result means that those without valid Social Security Cards may not apply for or apply to renew a New York State Drivers License. The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, which brought the original suit against the DMV in 2004, are considering an appeal to the ruling, and we will keep you updated on any further developments.

JOBS IRELAND – NEW YORK EXPO

FÁS, the Irish government Employment Authority will be holding a two-day expo on employment opportunities in Ireland. In addition Irish Government representatives will be giving advice on:

- Taxation
- Healthcare
- Education
- Employment Rights
- Visa/Permits

Venue: Affinia Manhattan Hotel

7th Avenue @ 31st Street, New York

Dates: Friday 20th October, 5:00 pm–8:00 pm

& Saturday 21st October, 10:00 am–5:00 pm

**The EIIC has a full-time social worker
available to assist in times of need.
For caring, compassionate, and confidential
assistance please contact:**

Kara at 718-478-5502 x210

All services are held in strict confidence.

INFORMATION, REFERRALS, & COUNSELING

are available for a range of concerns including:

- Drug and Alcohol Abuse • Relationship Issues
- Pregnancy • Depression or other Emotional Problems

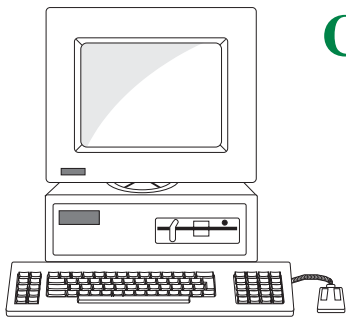
~ SENIORS SCENE ~

FREE PASSPORTS FOR IRISH SENIORS

On Monday 1 August 2005, Minister Dermot Ahern announced that passport fees will be waived for persons aged 65 years and over. Speaking at a Press Conference in Government Buildings in July, Minister Ahern said the initiative recognized the years of service and hard work of the nation's senior citizens. "I am very pleased that the life-long contribution to society of our senior citizens is being further recognized by the introduction of free passports. This will benefit over 60,000 such persons annually - about 10% of those who apply for passports annually. Anyone aged 65 and over from then will not be required to pay the fee for the issue of a 10-year passport.

Please come in to see us here in our offices or give Máire a call. We can help you or assist your Senior relative fill in the forms and apply for a free Irish Passport. Remember too that US immigration has introduced a higher standard of passport for travelers and so this is a great opportunity to ensure your passport complies with the new regulations (machine readable).

* * * * *



COMPUTER CLASSES FOR SENIORS (Woodside)

One of our most successful series of computer classes has been the Introduction to Computers. Maire Kerins and Kara Egan are teaching this class to seniors (anyone 60+) qualifies. Please give Maire a call at 718/478-5502 Ext. 208 if you are interested in joining the class held in our computer lab in Woodside (currently Wednesdays 1-3pm).

NEWS RELEASE...

Department For the Aging Social Security Administration

PUBLIC WARNED ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT E-MAIL SCAM

Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security, and Patrick O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General of Social Security, issued a warning about a new email scam that has surfaced recently.

The Agency has received several reports of an email message being circulated addressed to "Dear Social Security Number and Card Owner" and purporting to be from the Social Security Administration. The message informs the reader "that someone illegally is using your Social Security number and assuming your identity" and directs the reader to a website designed to look like Social Security's Internet website.

"I am outraged that someone would target an unsuspecting public in this manner," said Commissioner Barnhart. "I have asked the Inspector General to use all the resources at his command to find and prosecute whoever is perpetrating this fraud."

Once directed to the phony website, the individual is asked to confirm their identity with "Social Security and bank information." Specific information about the individual's credit card number, expiration date and PIN number is then requested. "Whether on our online website or by phone, Social Security will never ask you for your credit card information or your PIN number," Commissioner Barnhart said.

Inspector General O'Carroll recommends people always take precautions when giving out personal information. "You should never provide your Social Security number or other personal information over the Internet or by telephone unless you are extremely confident of the source to whom you are providing the information," O'Carroll said.

To report receipt of this email message or other suspicious activity to Social Security's Office of Inspector General, please call the OIG Hotline at 1-800-269-0271. (If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call the OIG TTY number at 1-866-501-2101.) A Public Fraud Reporting form is also available online at OIG's website www.socialsecurity.gov/oig.

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IMMIGRATION NEWS

CITIZENSHIP

EMERALD ISLE IMMIGRATION CENTER OFFERS FREE ASSISTANCE WITH CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS*

APPLY for Naturalization - Become a U.S. Citizen

~ Call NOW to make an appointment! ~

(718) 478-5502 (Queens) • (718) 324-3039 (Bronx)

Please note you will need to bring with you to the appointment:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Green card | ✓ All immigration documents | ✓ Any criminal records |
| ✓ Passport | ✓ Birth, marriage, and divorce papers | ✓ \$400 check/money order payable to USCIS |

*Also note that you must be a lawful permanent resident in the U.S. for a minimum of 3-5 years to be eligible for naturalization.

➤ Hablamos español

H-1B VISA CAP - JUNE 2006... June 1, 2006 USCIS REACHES H-1B CAP

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today that it has received a sufficient number of H-1B petitions to meet the congressionally mandated cap for fiscal year 2007 (FY 2007). The "final receipt date" for H-1B petitions subject to the FY 2007 annual cap was May 26, 2006. Affected H-1B petitions received on that date will be subject to the random selection process. H-1B petitions subject to the FY 2007 annual cap that are received by USCIS after the "final receipt date" will be rejected. Additional information regarding the specific number of H-1B petitions processed is available at: www.uscis.gov/graphics/services/tempbenefits/cap.htm.

DV 2007 Results Announced... IRELAND 160 NORTHERN IRELAND 42

Log onto our website to see DV results for all other countries.

The US Department of State has announced the results of the 2007 Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery. Selected entrants have been notified by mail of their eligibility to begin the application for this year's round of Diversity Visas. Those not selected will NOT receive any correspondence from the Department of State, but are free to re apply for next year's Lottery when the entry dates are announced later this year. Processing of the DV-2007 visas will begin on October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.

If you have received a notification, and have questions about your eligibility to apply for a Diversity Visa or to Adjust your Status in the United States, please contact Carmel at our Woodside office (718 478 5502), or Liam at our Woodlawn office (718 324 3039, liamboyle@eiic.org).

Please note that mere notification of selection does NOT guarantee that you will receive a Green Card, especially if you have ever been unlawfully present in the U.S. or have a criminal record.

2008 Diversity Visa Lottery Program Registration

Applications for the 2008 Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery will be accepted between noon Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4), Wednesday, October 4, 2006 and noon Eastern Standard Time (EST) (GMT-5) Sunday, December 3, 2006. Applicants may access the electronic Diversity Visa entry form at www.dvlottery.state.gov during the registration period. Paper entries will not be accepted. Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the last week of the registration period to enter. Heavy demand may result in website delays. No entries will be accepted after noon EST on December 3, 2006.

The annual DV program makes permanent residence visas available to persons meeting the simple, but strict, eligibility requirements. A computer-generated random lottery drawing chooses selectees for diversity visas. The visas, however, are distributed among six geographic regions with a greater number of visas going to regions with lower rates of immigration, and with no visas going to nationals of countries sending more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States over the period of the past five years. Within each region, no one country may receive more than seven percent of the available Diversity Visas in any one year.

For DV-2008, natives of the following countries[1] are **not** eligible to apply because they sent a total of more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States over the period of the previous five years:

BRAZIL, CANADA, CHINA (mainland-born), COLOMBIA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, EL SALVADOR, HAITI, INDIA, JAMAICA, MEXICO, PAKISTAN, PHILIPPINES, PERU, POLAND, RUSSIA, SOUTH KOREA, UNITED KINGDOM (except Northern Ireland) and its dependent territories, and VIETNAM. Persons born in Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR and Taiwan are eligible.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 and the U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology program (US-VISIT) have serious implications for any undocumented winners of the DV-2008 visa lottery. These implications will be thoroughly explained by calling our qualified counselor staff. The Act introduced bars to legalization to overstayers after September 27, 1997 and the US-VISIT program has enabled an entry-exit tracking system. Those undocumented living in the U.S. should know about the law and its enforcement.

EIIC RECENT EVENTS

EIIC Golf Outing



Pictured (at left) at the EIIC golf outing in Stony Point, NY June 22, 2006: Dan Dennehy, Mike O'Hanlon, Chris Berger and Scott Mettey. Thanks to all (especially Randi Delirod) for their help and participation.

2006 Robert Briscoe Awards



Pictured at the 21 Club in Manhattan at the Briscoe Awards are Therese Crowe, Andrew GraBois and 2006 Robert Briscoe recipient Stuart GraBois (Executive Director, NY District Council of Carpenters Benefit Fund).

18th Annual Dinner Dance

Our 18th Annual Dinner Dance was held Friday 14th October at Astoria World Manor, New York. In attendance was New York's Mayor Mr. Mike Bloomberg who spoke briefly and mingled with guests. Music for the evening was provided by The New York Show Band and we take this opportunity to thank our many friends and supporters who made the evening such a huge success.

THIS YEAR'S HONOREES



(L-R) Jerry Leary-Health and Welfare Secretary-NYPD Sergeants Benevolent Assn., Maurice Leary-Recording Secretary-Local 608, Adolfo Carrion Jr.-Bronx Borough President



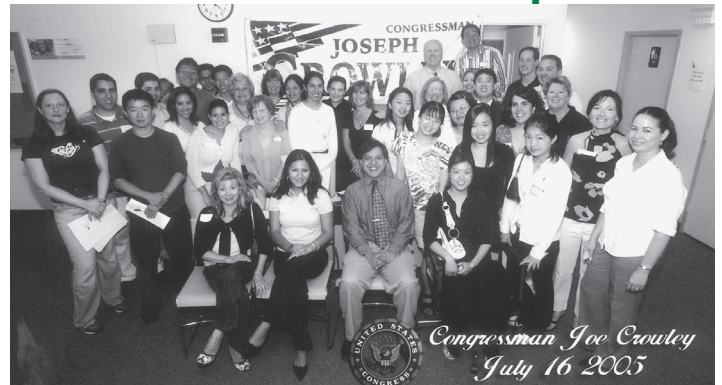
Brian O'Dwyer, Mae O'Driscoll, 2005 Honorees Maurice Leary and Adolfo Carrion, Don Kelly, Siobhán Dennehy, Bill Donohue, 2005 Honoree Maurice Leary, Noreen O'Donoghue and Tim O'Connor.

Frank Carvill Woodside Memorial



(At left) November 2, 2005 - Pictured at the Frank Carvill street renaming outside our offices in Woodside (in memory of our former Treasurer who died in action in Iraq on June 4, 2004) are State Assembly member Margaret Markey, members of the Carvill Family, Council member Eric Gioia, National Guard member Lynn Washington and Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan.

Summer 2005 Citizenship Drive



Senator Joe Crowley, EIIC staff and applicants celebrate the First Annual Citizenship Dive held July, 16th in Jackson Heights, Queens. The day proved a success for all and anyone interested in citizenship should contact the EIIC.

Enda Kenny at EIIC



Mae O'Driscoll, Brian O'Dwyer, Enda Kenny, Siobhán Dennehy, and Noreen O'Donoghue.

Emerald Isle Immigration
59-26 Woodside Avenue
Woodside, NY 11377

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We're on the web at
www.eiic.org

**SAVE THESE
DATES**

UPCOMING EVENTS

19TH ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

will be held on **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2006**

at the **Astoria World Manor**

25-22 Astoria Boulevard, Astoria, NY at 8:00 p.m.

This year we are honoring three individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Irish Community.

The Honorable Christine C. Quinn, Speaker, New York City Council

Mr. James P. Mahoney, Business Agent, Local Union #580

Ornamental & Architectural Iron Workers

Mr. James A. Lombard, EIIC Board Member,

Retired Director, Administrative Services Division, New York City Council

TICKETS FOR THE EVENT ARE \$80.00 PER PERSON

Save with the Emerald Package which consists of a table of 10 and an Emerald page in our dinner journal for \$1,000.

Music will be provided by the Mike Keogh Band.

**Call Sandra Boyle, EIIC Deputy Director
at 718/478-5502 Ext. 211 for more details.**

**Monday
January 29, 2007
EIIC
ROBERT BRISCOE
AWARDS
21 Club
Manhattan**

If there is anything you would like to see in future issues, please contact siobhand@eiic.org for inclusion in our next newsletter alternatively you can check out our website @ www.eiic.org