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Queens Bar Bulletin
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THE PRACTICE PAGE
THE TIME FOR FILING THE NOTICE OF APPEAL

by Hon. Mark C. Dillon *

CPLR 5513(a) provides that the time for taking an appeal as of right is 30 days after service by a party of a copy of the order or judgment to be appealed from, with notice of its entry. While that rule sounds straight-forward, beware of a couple of complications.

Those of us practicing law at least 25 years ago remember a time when the procedures for obtaining, serving, entering, and appealing from orders and judgments varied from county to county. In some counties, judges filed original papers with the county clerk and transmitted written notice of entry as to trigger the time for filing appeals. In other counties, judges filed the original papers with the clerk's office but notified parties that they needed to obtain and serve a copy to trigger the appellate time frame. Elsewhere, attorneys needed to periodically requisition files at clerk's offices to locate orders or judgments, to then serve them with notice of entry. And there were even some counties in the state where original papers were sent by the judge to the movant, who was then responsible for filing the orders or judgments with notice of entry. To unify the administrative and geographical differences between counties, the state legislature amended CPLR 5513(a) effective January 1, 1997 to require "service" of the order or judgment to be appealed from by "a party" to the action, with notice of entry, which uniformly commences the time for filing a Notice of Appeal for all.

The calculation of the 30-day time for filing a Notice of Appeal is muddied if multiple parties serve the same order or judgment with notice of entry on different dates. Are the 30 days measured from the first such notice, or the last? If notice of entry is served upon some, but not all parties, when does the time to

appeal commence? Are five days added for mailing?

A recent opinion from the Appellate Division, Second Department, clarifies all of the foregoing questions, as the answers have not always been understood. W. Rogowski Farm, LLC v County of Orange, decided on March 13, 2019, involved the appellants' suit to declare null and void a prior tax foreclosure judgment against certain parcels of land in Orange County, and an appeal of the Supreme Court's denial of that prayer for relief. The order appealed from was served with Notice of Entry three times by three different respondent parties. The Appellate Division dismissed the appellants' entire appeal as untimely, since the Notice of Appeal was filed beyond the time frame of CPLR 5513(a) measured from the first service of the order with notice of entry to all. The initial Notice of Entry commenced the 30-day deadline as to all of the parties who, by affidavit of service, were served with it. In dicta, the Appellate Division stated a logical corollary: if an order or judgment is served upon some, but not all, parties, the time to appeal by a party not served does not begin to run until service with Notice of Entry is accomplished against it.

While attorneys and judges are programmed to think of the appeal time as 30 days, the mailing of the Notice of Entry adds five days to the calculation, so that as a practical matter, an appealing party has 35 days from the date of the initial mail service. However, if the appealing party self-serves the order or judgment with Notice of Entry, it is not entitled to an additional five days for its own mailing. With e-filing, the time runs from the e-filing with Notice of Entry, without extension.

The importance of CPLR 5513 is that non-compliance with the statute's deadline is a non-waivable and jurisdictional defect which cannot be forgiven under CPLR 2001. Mark the appeal time on your office calendars accordingly.

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* Mark C. Dillon is a Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department, and an Adjunct Professor of New York Practice at Fordham Law School.

1. Mem. of the Office of Court Admin., Bill Jacket, L. 1996, ch. 214.
2. __AD3d __, 2019 WL 1141580.
3. CPLR 2103(b)(2); Stancage v Stancage, 173 AD2d 1081.
4. Mileski v MSC Indus. Direct Co., Inc., 138 AD3d 797, 799.

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The Docket

Being the official notice of the meetings and programs listed below, which, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Bar Association Building, 90-35 148th Street, Jamaica, NY. Due to unforeseen events, please note that dates listed in this schedule are subject to change. More information and changes will be made available to members via written notice and brochures. Questions? Please call 718-291-4500.

CLE Seminar & Event listings

May 2019

Thursday, May 2	Annual Dinner & Installation of Officers
Tuesday, May 7	DA Candidate's Forum at North Shore Towers
Thursday, May 16	CLE: LGBT & Military Law Comm Seminar
Monday, May 27	Memorial Day - Office Closed
Thursday, May 30	CLE: CPLR & Evidence Update at Civil Court

Upcoming Seminars
Surrogate's Court Seminar

New Members

Vladimir Cadet
Janet Cazares
Richard J. Cordero
Stephen J. Donnelly, Jr.
Mariam Farag
Dominique Fequiere
Eric T. Johnson
Mario T. Karonia
Jonathan E. Kirchner
Gabriel R. Munson
Anthony M. Nania
Mia Anne Polizzotto
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President's Message

Springtime is finally here and Mother Nature is finally returning the warmth to our environment. Trees and flowers are starting to bloom, and the earth is awakening and coming to life. Many of us have been focusing on spring housecleaning, and sprucing up our homes and offices. Some of us have been inspired to reassess our priorities, eliminating some activities to make room for projects that we have been intending to work on. Some of us may just be feeling overextended and asking ourselves how we can ease up on our obligations and workload.

As members of the legal profession our work is not easy, and we often can be very hard and critical of ourselves. We often represent and work with people who are in dire straits, critical situations, or even with their liberty at stake. We have to repeatedly remind ourselves that we do not need to take all of their problems on. We need to take care of ourselves because no one is going to do that but us.

Dear Members, think about how you may be overextended this month. Are you trying to pick up the slack for someone who is not pulling their own weight? Perhaps it is a partner or business associate in your life or a family member at home, or a friend? Or have you made too many commitments and are you over-extending yourself? Are you not leaving enough time to rest? How can you ease your workflow and free up some of your time? How can you delegate responsibility to others who are willing and able to help you? What resources can you use that will make your work flow better, facilitating getting the job done? It is important to consider that if we are burned out then we will not be good or effective for representing or taking care of anyone, including ourselves. So, I encourage you to take some time this month and think about how you can ease up on things in your life.

Some good news is that you can turn to the Bar Association for resources and support.

At the Bar Association, we do not just focus on the substantive law. This month we have had several CLE programs that promote the well-being of our members. On April 8th the Association's stated meeting's topic was "Memory Switch: Techniques for Lawyers" which taught lawyers how to use their memory, share information, and reduce stress and time management. On April 16th the Lawyers Assistance Committee sponsored a program entitled, "Alzheimer's and Dementia: Prevention, Legal Protection and Resources for the Patient and Caregiver." We offer support, networking opportunities, practical information, and we facilitate communication between the Bench and the Bar. All of these resources enhance the day to day practice of law.

The Association recently launched its Virtual Office Space, where for a reasonable fee, you can have an office address in Queens, and we can accept your mail and service of process for you. Also, as a member you can enjoy use of the library, Westlaw and Nexis as well as avail yourself of conference room space (pre-booking necessary, subject to availability). You can look on our bulletin boards to find available office space and open job postings. There are many active committees that serve the interest and practice areas of our members.

The Bar Association will always be here to support you Dear Members. We encourage you to join us and get involved. What would you like to see at the Bar Association, to make it better? We are open to suggestions.

Marie-Eleana First,
President

Editor's Note

Unfair College and University Admissions

By Paul E. Kerson

The American Jewish Community has long known that Ivy League colleges and universities have unwritten, unspoken quotas on Jewish students, however well qualified.

Legendary story:

Ivy League representative to a group of worried suburban parents: "We can't have too many students from the doughnuts of suburbs surrounding our major cities."

Worried suburban parent: "These suburbs aren't doughnuts, they're bagels."

This is not anti-Semitism, just its very close cousin, anti-Semitism lite. ("We'll take some of you, just not too many, and we'll tell you how many is too many.") The pain and sense of unfairness to the student-applicant is just the same.

Fortunately, we have 1,949 years of experience in dealing with this problem, since the destruction of the Second Temple in the Land of Israel by the Roman Empire in the year 70 CE, and the resulting scattering of the Jewish population all over the world – the Diaspora.

The Solution: Work around it and overcome it.

In 1986, the University Athletic Association (UAA) was organized with the specific idea of prioritizing academics over athletics in higher education. As an unadvertised side benefit of this philosophy, Jewish students were and are welcome without regard to quotas.

Academics is at the core of the religion. The Bar and Bat Mitzvah involve reading a portion of the Old Testament in Ancient Hebrew at middle school age in front of one's whole community of friends, relatives and neighbors, and explaining (in English) what it all means. Morality is much of it. The student must promise a life of good deeds (mitzvahs). It does not always work, but it usually does.

Worried parents of every background take special note: Apply to the UAA member schools in the usual way. The "Egghead Eight" is ready to welcome your sons and daughters who have studied well in high school (without quotas of any type): Brandeis University, Carnegie-Mellon University, Case Western Reserve University, Emory University, New York University, the University of Chicago, the University of Rochester and Washington University in St. Louis.

Ivy League institutions take special note: If you continue your unfair, quota-driven admissions process much longer, the UAA will overtake you as the nation's leading group of universities. Indeed, one could argue that this has already happened.

"Selective" colleges and universities must re-learn this elemental fact: Applicants must be judged as Individual Human Beings, not as members of groups they had no choice in joining. It is what the Individual applicant did with the resources available to him or her that counts, NOT group membership at birth.

And what if a student slacked off in high school? What then? The words of a very wise high school guidance counselor to a group of very worried Westchester parents some years ago is worth repeating: "There are 2000 plus colleges and universities in this country. They are the envy of the world. But the 'secret' is that only 200 of them have competitive admissions. The other 1800 plus will be more than happy to educate your children, no matter what they did in high school."

Your Editor went to Bayside High School in Bayside, Queens County, NY, where he was on the Honor Roll and a Member of the Arista. He then went to Case Western Reserve University and the Columbia University Law School.

Tenant Harassment: Update

By R. Klie

I wrote an article on tenant harassment for The Queens County Bar Bulletin in January 2018. This is a follow up of cases dealing with the tenant harassment laws that were passed by the New York City Council and approved by Mayor Bill DeBlasio at the end of 2017.

These laws enabled New York housing court judges to award compensatory damages, reasonable legal fees and punitive damages to harassed tenants or occupants of multi-unit dwellings in New York pursuant to Administrative Code Section 27-2115(o). There have been a handful of notable tenant harassment cases, but they have not been subjected to appellate court review.

Recently the Hon Jeanine Baer Kuznienski awarded five harassed tenants in Brooklyn civil penalties of $6,000 each, compensatory damages totaling more than $62,000 and punitive damages of $5,000 in the case of Caban v. Silver (HP 3383/18). In this case, the landlord was judged to have harassed the tenants by changing locks to apartment doors and not providing the tenants with keys, emptying apartments of personal property, ransacking an apartment and filling it with garbage, discontinuing essential services, etc. This decision was rendered on January 9, 2019 after the inquest and was reported in The New York Law Journal on February 14.

In Hilltop 161 LLC v. Philbert, 62 Misc3d 1212 (A), the Hon. Sabrina B. Kraus ruled on January 28 that the petitioner harassed the rent stabilized tenant. In this case, the only penalty imposed was a civil penalty of $2,000 upon each petitioner payable to the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development (DHPD). The court did not award the tenant compensatory or punitive damages. The conduct of the petitioner was significant, according to the decision, as it included changing the locks to the building and not providing the tenant with a new key, failing to offer the tenant a proper renewal lease and then commencing a holdover action for the tenant's failure to renew.

In the case Acosta v. 202 South 2nd Street, LLC, 62 Misc.3d 1209 (A) (Kings Co. Civil Ct 1/9/19), the Hon. Jeannine Baer Kuzniewski granted the petitioner's motion to dismiss part of the petition that sought a finding of harassment as the pleadings stated conclusory allegations and the facts were not set forth detailing the harassing acts or omissions. The court noted that "The harassment statute, and its recent amendments, are a powerful and necessary shield to protect tenants, however, that does not negate the procedural due process requirements that the [Civil Practice Law and Rules] intended." Tenant(s) alleging harassment need to be fact-specific and detail the alleged acts of harassment based upon said decision.

In New York, a new law known as Local Law 1 of 2018 became effective September 27. It is codified in the NYC Administrative Code Section 27-2093.1 and 28-505.3. This law establishes a three-year pilot program that requires owners of certain multiple-dwelling buildings to obtain a Certificate of No Harassment (CONH) prior to obtaining permits from the New York City Department of Buildings for any work involving demolition or changes in use/occupancy of a building. The affected buildings in this pilot program are in the following geographic areas: Bronx Community District 4 (Highbridge, Concourse Village, Concourse East, Concourse West, Mount Eden); Bronx Community District 5 (Fordham, Morris Heights, Mount Hope, University Heights); Bronx Community District 7 (Bedford Park, Norwood); Brooklyn Community District 3 (Bedford-Stuyvesant); Brooklyn Community District 4 (Bushwick); Brooklyn Community District 5 (East New York); Brooklyn Community District 16 (Brownsville, Ocean Hill); Manhattan Community District 9 (Western Harlem); Manhattan Community District 11 (East Harlem); Manhattan Community District 12 (Washington Heights, Inwood); and Queens Community District 14 (the Rockaways).

If the owner is denied a CONH, the owner will be precluded from obtaining building permits for the covered categories of work set forth in NYC Administrative Code Section 28-505.3 (demolition of all or part of a building, change of use or occupancy, any alteration resulting in the addition or removal of a kitchen or bathroom, an increase or decrease in the number of dwelling units, or any change in the layout, configuration, or location of any portion of any dwelling units, an application for a new or amended certificate of occupancy, or such other types of alteration work to a pilot program building as shall be prescribed by rule of the commissioner of HPD) for five years. This is an onerous penalty. An owner of a multiple-dwelling building who cannot obtain building permits will not be able to obtain certificates of occupancy and cannot collect rent pursuant to MDL Section 302.

The NYC Administrative Code Section 27-2093.1 (8) provides that: "Where the department has denied or rescinded a certificate of no harassment for a pilot program building, the Department of Buildings shall not approve construction documents or issue or renew permits for covered categories of work in such building for a period of 60 months after such denial or rescission unless the owner enters into an agreement with the department to cure the record of harassment in accordance with subd. e. This subdivision provides that to cure the record of harassment at a pilot program building, the owner must engage in or provide for, through an entity identified by the department as capable of developing new affordable housing in the same community district as the pilot program building, the construction of floor area of low-income housing, either within the pilot program building, in a new building at the same site as the pilot program building, or within the same community district, in accordance with rules promulgated by the department, provided that such owner shall construct or provide within such building or community district no less than the greater of: (i) 25 percent of the total residential floor area of such pilot program building undergoing covered work in which harassment has occurred, or (ii) 20 percent of the total floor area of any new or pilot program building undergoing covered work on the lot containing the pilot program building subject to such agreement.

Additionally, the owner shall record and index a restrictive declaration with respect to such agreement with the city register or county clerk."

The certificate of no harassment requirement previously was only applicable to single-room occupancy buildings. This new law has expanded the category of buildings affected by this process. Owners of affected buildings are required to receive a certificate of no harassment from DHPD before the Department of Buildings (DOB) will issue the permits. The DHPD webpage describes the process as follows: "the owner must submit an application for the CONH to HPD. HPD will investigate and determine whether there has been harassment at such building within the five-year period preceding the application. If HPD determines evidence of harassment exists, a hearing will be held at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). The OATH judge makes a recommendation as to whether harassment occurred based on the evidence, and based upon that recommendation, the HPD commissioner will grant or deny the CONH.

The caution for owners is to avoid any conduct that could lead to a finding of harassment.

The advice for tenants being harassed by their landlords is to keep detailed records of the acts of harassment and to be prepared to present that evidence in court.

Corrections for 2019 Directory

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Victims of Human Trafficking, T Nonimmigrant Visa

By Dev B. Viswanath, Esq. & Michael Phulwani, Esq.

The T nonimmigrant visa was created by Congress to help provide temporary immigration relief to victims of human trafficking. It was part of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. The visa is granted for up to four years to victims who have helped law enforcement in an investigation of prosecution of human trafficking. Certain qualifying family members of trafficking victims may also be granted a T visa. T nonimmigrant visa holders are allowed to work and receive certain federal and state benefits and services. They may also be able to adjust their status and become lawful permanent residents.

Human trafficking is a modern day form of slavery, where traffickers force individuals to perform services or provide labor without any or very little compensation and keep them under very limited and often restrictive circumstances. Traffickers usually prey on vulnerable individuals such as those who are poor or from vulnerable rungs of society. There are two main forms of trafficking: sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Sex trafficking is when someone uses force, fraud, or coercion to cause a commercial sex act with an adult or causes a minor to commit a commercial sex act. A commercial sex act can be prostitution, pornography, or any sexual acts done in exchange for money, drugs, shelter, food, or clothes. Labor trafficking is when someone uses force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of involuntary servitude or slavery.

Who may be eligible for T nonimmigrant status?

- If an individual was a victim of either sex trafficking or labor trafficking;
- If the individual is in the United States, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or at any port of entry as a result of the trafficking;
- If the individual fulfills any reasonable requests from a law enforcement agency to help in the investigation or prosecution of human trafficking, this does not apply to individuals under the age of 18 or individuals who have physical or psychological trauma;
- If the individual is able to show that they would suffer extreme hardship if they were removed from the United States; and
- The individual is in all other ways admissible to the United States, if they are not admissible then they may be allowed to apply for a waiver.

Any information about the applicant or their application is kept strictly confidential and is protected by law. The Department of Homeland Security may only share the applicant's information in very limited circumstances. Applicants who are under the age of 21 may also apply for their spouse, children, parents, and unmarried siblings who are under the age of 18. Applicants who are over the age of 21 may also apply for their spouse and unmarried children who are under the age of 21.

The T nonimmigrant visa is initially granted for four years but in some situations the visa holder may extend their status. T nonimmigrant visa holders may apply for lawful permanent resident status after three years in T nonimmigrant status or once the investigation or prosecution of the trafficking is over, whichever happens first. Congress allows 5,000 T nonimmigrant visas to be granted every year, but this limit does not apply to family derivative visas. Once the cap is reached, applicants are placed on a waiting list and then given first priority the following year.

Judiciary, Past Presidents, & Golden Jubilarian Night 3-12-19

Past Presidents - Standing: Steven S. Orlow (08-09), Hon. Joseph Risi (12-13), Chanwoo Lee (10-11), Hon. Hilary Gingold (18), George J. Nashak, Jr. (05-06), Guy R. Vitacco, Jr. (09-10), Gregory J. Newman (17-18), Gregory J. Brown (16-17)
Sitting: Paul E. Kerson (15-16), Richard M. Gutierrez (11-12), Seymour W. James, Jr. (01-02), Herbert Rubin (71-72), David L. Cohen (07-08), Steven Wimpfheimer (99-00), Hon. Sidney F. Strauss (90-91) and Joseph Carola, III (14-15) **Can you tell us who's missing?**

Gary Miret with Academy of Law awardee, James P. De Franco, Jr.

Golden Jubilarians - Dominic Villoni, Steven Orlow, Hon. Robert Nahman, Lawrence Litwack and Joseph Dubowski

Guest Speaker, NYSBA President Elect Henry Hank Greenberg.

Hon. Cassandra Johnson, Greg Brown, Deb Garibaldi, Janet Keller and Hon. Anna Grimaldi

Hon. Clinton Guthrie, Hon. Sergio Jimenez and Hon. Joel Kullas

Hon. Elizabeth Yablon, Janet Keller, Hon. Hilary Gingold, Marie-Eleana First and Allison Ageyeva

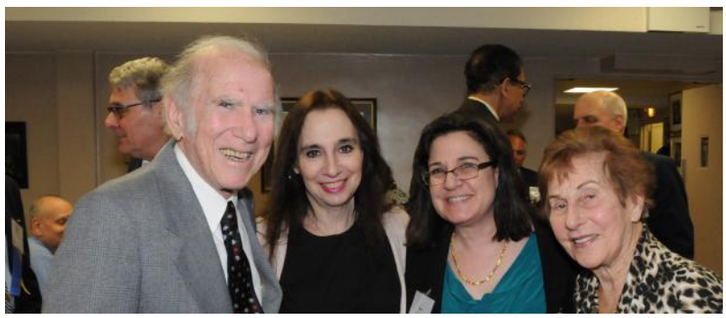
Hon. Jeremy Weinstein speaking about Court Appreciation awardee, Deborah Jorgensen.

Hon. Joseph Zayas, Henry Greenberg, Nicole McGregor-Mundy and Hon. Margarite Grays

Hon. Julie Poley, Hon. Lydia Lai and Hon. Maria Ressos

Hon. Michelle Johnson, Hon. Lourdes Ventura, Violet Samuels and Allison Ageyeva

Hon. Lance Evans, Jason Sackoor, Robert Frommer and Hon. Ira Greenberg



Hon. Morton Povman, Hon. Elizabeth Yablon, Maria Bradley and Sandra Povman

Michael Abneri, Chair of the Program Committee

Michael Abneri, Hon. Augustus Agate and Hon. David Elliot

Nicole McGregor-Mundy, Hon. Lourdes Ventura, Hon. Cheree Buggs, Hon. Howard Lane and Richard Gutierrez

photos by

Walter Karling

U.S. Representatives Demand Accountability from USCIS

By: Allen E. Kaye and Jospeh DeFelice

February 12, 2019, Reps. García (D-IL), Espaillat (D-NY), and Velázquez (D-NY) as well as 83 more House Democrats sent a letter to Director L. Francis Cissna raising concerns about USCIS's growing backlog of adjudications. The letter cites data from AILA's policy brief on USCIS processing delays.

The Honorable Lee Francis Cissna
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
111 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20529

Director Cissna,

We write to express our grave concerns about the alarming growth in processing delays at U.S.
Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and request your prompt and detailed response to the inquiries enumerated in this letter.

Analyses of recent Department of Homeland Security data demonstrate erosion of the agency's critical services. USCIS was created in 2002, by Congress when it passed the Homeland Security Act, to be a service-oriented, immigration service agency with the mission to adjudicate immigration matters to enable individuals to obtain work authorization, citizenship, humanitarian protection and other important services.

According to recent reports, including a January 30, 2019 report from the American Immigration Lawyers Association, processing delays at USCIS have reached crisis-levels, with adverse consequences to American families, U.S. businesses, and vulnerable populations seeking humanitarian relief.

Processing delays jeopardize the ability of individuals to work, leaving families without income for food, housing, and healthcare. Domestic abuse survivors, abandoned children, and those seeking asylum or refugee status may be left in life-threatening circumstances without timely adjudication. Finally, U.S. businesses, including farmers and small business owners, rely on USC IS' processing of work-visas to fill critical workforce gaps in order to remain competitive.

USCIS data for fiscal years 20 I 4 through 20 I 8 depict a 46% surge in overall average case processing time and a 91% increase since FY 2014.2 In an April 2018 report to Congress, OHS identified a net backlog of 2,330,143 USCIS cases at the end of FY 2017, which is more than double the backlog reported after FY 2016 and coincides with the first full year after President Trump took office.

Clearly, policy changes implemented by the current administration in 2017 and 2018 have increasingly shifted the agency away from its service-oriented mission. Rather than continuing to seek ways to simplify and streamline its benefit-delivery systems, USCIS now appears more focused on erecting barriers to the benefits it administers, including by significantly delaying adjudications.

For these reasons and as part of our Congressional oversight duties, we ask that you provide detailed and prompt responses to the following inquiries and requests:

I. Please identify the causes of the current backlog, including all policies introduced under the
current administration that have contributed to the USCIS case backlog.

2. Please provide all analyses performed by the agency on how these policies impact processing
times, including but not limited to how the following have contributed to the backlog:

a. Use of "extreme vetting;"
b. USCIS's new in-person interview requirement for relatives of asylees and refugees as well as individuals seeking employment-based green cards;
c. USCIS's reversal of longstanding guidance concerning deference towards prior
determinations regarding non-immigrant employment extension petitions.

3. In an April 2018 OHS report to Congress, the reported net backl_og at the conclusion of FY 2017 exceeded 2.3 million cases. Does this number constitute a new record-high?

4. Please identify the current USCIS "net backlog," "gross backlog," and "case completion rate," as well as those figures at the end of each of the past five fiscal years.

5. USCIS's proposed FY 2019 budget requested the transfer of over 200 million dollars in fee
revenue out of USCIS into ICE. The budget specifies that that money would be used, among
other purposes, for the hiring of over 300 ICE enforcement officers. This appears to represent part of USCIS's larger shift towards prioritizing immigration enforcement over the service-oriented adjudications at the core of the agency's mandate. Why, at a time when families, vulnerable individuals, and U.S. businesses are suffering around the country due to pervasive USCIS processing delays, did your agency seek to transfer over 200 million dollars of USCIS resources to ICE?

6. USCIS case volume substantially decreased through the first three quarters of FY 2018- the most recent period for which data is publicly available-yet USCIS processing times increased
substantially in FY 2018. Why do processing times continue to escalate even as case volume
appears to recede?

7. How does USCIS intend to reduce and ultimately eliminate processing delays, while ensuring
fairness and quality of adjudications, and without passing the costs of the agency's inefficiencies onto the applicants and petitioners experiencing hardship due to USCIS's crisis-level delays?

Whatever the factors may be that are contributing to the current and unprecedented USCIS backlog in processing cases, more must be done to address, reduce, and prevent future delays. The agency was created by Congressional mandate and we, the undersigned Members of Congress, urge the agency to swiftly provide detailed answers to the queries listed above and ask for your ongoing cooperation and full transparency in the efforts to reduce and eliminate the current backlog.

Allen E. Kaye and Joseph DeFelice are Co-Chairs of the Immigration and Naturalization Committee of the Queens County Bar Association.

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More missions to Guyana, more Corneal Transplants

From March 27th through April 1st, 2019, Zara Realty's Subraj Foundation embarked on yet another mission to guyana to offer free eye screenings, and distribute spectacles to thousands in need.

88 Corneal Transplants were conducted, and 2,300 pairs of glasses were distributed in Guyana late last month thanks to The George Subraj Family Foundation.

Within a six-day window, three eye care clinics were performed in the three counties of Guyana.

The team conducted of members of the George Subrah Family Foundation, and the Georgetown Public Hospital of Guyana (GPHC).

The George Subraj Family foundation team members/coordinators are Subraj's wife, Gloria; children: Tony and Jasmine and his close friends: Jay Jainarine and Richard B. Mahase; a family that is proud to give back to their country of origin.

The GPHC team consisted of ophthalmologists, nurses and optometrists who volunteered their time during the clinics.

"Many of these clinic participants had their eyes tested for the first time," said Head of the GPHC Ophthalmology Department, Dr. Shailendra Sugrim.

"Some of these patients were found to have uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension because the team also conducted blood pressure and blood sugar testing," Dr. Sugrim added.

"These patients were then educated on how to manage their medical conditions," he said.

The last day of the eye clinic, Dr. Sugrim shared, also consisted of an ophthalmologist and optometrist from the Woodlands Hospital.

Accompanying the team, too, were students of the University of Guyana's School of Optometry.

It was a great learning experience for students, and a blessing for participants of the free screening," Dr. Sugrim added.

Sourced from Kaieteur News:

Last December, the Subraj Foundation also worked closely with Cornea Specialists, Dr. Joseph Pasternak of Washington, and the Lions Eye Bank to procure emergency corneal transplant tissues. There was a one-eyed patient , developed an infection of the cornea, and was about to lose his only seeing eye.

According to Dr. Sugrim, "Tony Subraj, President of the Subraj Foundation, acted immediately to buy and transport the desperately needed corneal tissue immediately to Guyana to save the patients only functioning eye."

This relationship with GPHC was started by the founder of the foundation – the late George Subraj.

The foundation, on an intermittent basis, continues to assist with the provision of corneal tissues for sight-saving surgeries at GPHC.

The GPHC Ophthalmology team was trained by US-based Corneal Specialists to perform these surgeries independently.

Reports suggest that corneal transplant patients have continuously been expressing their gratitude to the Foundation for giving them this opportunity to have their surgery performed here in Guyana than overseas.

Dr. Sugrim said, "Patients would usually have to travel overseas to have these procedures performed."

Meanwhile, at a small ceremony held at GPHC Sunday, the Subraj Foundation donated three ophthalmic equipment to the GPHC Eye Department.

These equipment, Dr. Sugrim said, include a table-top tonometer and a hand-held tonometer which are necessary equipment that aids eye care professionals to test the intraocular pressure [eye pressure].

The third equipment is a Corneal Topographer – an instrument that scans the cornea and aids in diagnosis of corneal diseases and also in management of cornea patients after cornea transplant surgery.