



Transcending BordersSM

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Original Content

Naturalization FAQs

Common misconceptions leave many legal permanent residents (LPRs) thinking they are not eligible to naturalize when, in fact, they are. This is especially important in an election year when

naturalization means a chance to vote. In this blog post, Senior Attorney **Adriana Robinson** answers the most common questions GYH receives about eligibility to naturalize.

[Read more...](#)



Demystifying Priority Dates

The process of obtaining a green card can be complex. It is often hard to understand the wait times for the application and how this can vary based on which country you will be coming from and what visa preference category you in. In this blog post, Attorney **Valerie Mahoney** answers common questions about green card processing and wait times.

[Read more...](#)

The J-1 Research Scholar

The J-1 research scholar can be a great option for qualifying individuals and organizations, as it can be granted for up to 5 years. In this blog post, Senior Attorney **Nikki Whetstone** explains what it is, who qualifies, and how it may benefit you.



[Read more...](#)



Did Immigrant Workers Bussed from Texas Help DC Restaurants?

For years we've been hearing about a shortage of workers from our DC-area restaurant clients. But recently, our clients have reported a much easier time finding local staff. What changed?

Industry insiders speculate that Texas Governor Abbot's program that bussed more than 10,000 migrants to the area may have unintentionally benefitted DC-area restaurants.

Partner **Becki Young** explains more in a [recent blog post](#).

Policy Updates

E-2 Visa for Portugal



The U.S. Embassy in Lisbon Portugal **recently announced** that it will accept E-1 Treaty Trader and E-2 Investor visa applications. President Biden signed the AMIGOS Act in 2023, adding Portugal to the list of E-2 treaty countries. It took until 2024, however, for the U.S. Embassy in Portugal to begin accepting E-2 applications.

Learn more about the E-2 and other investor visas via our webinar [here](#).

U.S. Imposes Visa Restriction Policy for Georgia



The Department of State (DOS) issued a **press statement** on May 23rd announcing the implementation of a visa restriction policy for Georgia. This move is in response to a “foreign influence” law passed by the ruling Georgian Dream party, a reaction to recent protests in the country. DOS argues that the new law stifles free speech and the Georgian democracy that the U.S. has long supported.

There is little information about how this will be implemented, but the new policy indicates that certain individuals who are deemed to “undermine democracy” in Georgia (including Dream Party members) may be found ineligible for a U.S. visa and precluded from travel to the U.S. This includes immediate family members of those individuals.



Record Number of Student Visas Denied in 2023

Many high-skilled immigrants begin their careers and contributions to the United States as international students on F-1 visas. They study at American universities and secure U.S. jobs after graduation, primarily through **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**, a post-graduate employment authorization program.

Despite the value of these visas, the **State Department (DOS) rejected an unprecedented 36 percent of student visa applicants in 2023**. This amounts to 253,355 rejected F-1 applications, surpassing 2022's record. DOS does not specify why student visas are denied but, typically, these visas are denied for failure to prove “nonimmigrant intent” – meaning the applicants do not intend to stay in the U.S. permanently.

This record denial rate comes after officials **published guidance** that lowered the standard of evidence for international students. While DOS does not disclose denial rates by nationality, reports indicate that there may be disparities, especially for Chinese and Indian applicants. The Cato Institute also estimates that rejecting over a quarter of a million F-1 applications amounts to roughly \$30.4 billion in lost economic benefits to the United States over the four years students would be at university.

Paris Olympics Expected to Cause Significant Visa Delays

The State Department's **global visa wait times** for Paris continue to grow as the Olympics draws nearer. **Significant visa processing delays** are expected through mid-September.

The State Department **urged travelers** in need of a new passport to renew them as soon as possible if traveling to France and Europe this summer. France launched a new **consulate platform** to streamline the visa application process for the 2024 Paris Olympics. U.S. citizens generally do not need a visa to enter France but travelers can complete a short **online questionnaire** to determine whether they need a visa.



Germany: New Citizenship Law

Germany passed a **new citizenship law**, which will take effect on June 26, 2024. Key changes in the new law include:

- Reduction in the minimum period of German residence required to apply for citizenship is reduced from eight years to five years. In some cases, the minimum period can be as short as three years (down from eight years).
- German citizens will be allowed to hold multiple citizenships, whereas previously dual citizenship was only possible in rare circumstances.
- Children of parents from abroad will be eligible for German citizenship at birth if one parent has legally lived in Germany for five years.

The new law is expected to result in an increase in requests for German citizenship. The changes may also make Germany a more attractive market for foreign talent.

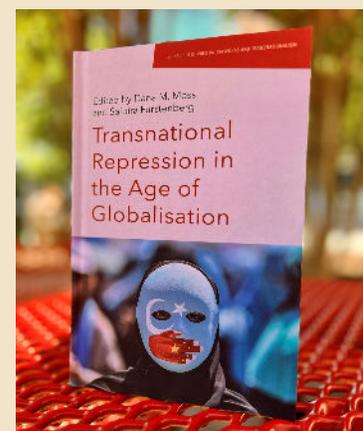
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International Protection Practice - IPP News

GYH Partners Publish Book Chapter

Hot Off the Press! – “Transnational Repression in the Age of Globalisation.” Bringing together leading scholars, this volume is the first of its kind to address the growing global phenomenon of transnational repression in a comparative perspective. Partners **Sandra Grossman** and **Meg Hobbins** are proud contributors to this important text.

Their chapter, “Backdoor Extraditions: How Authoritarian Regimes Manipulate Interpol and the US Immigration System to Persecute Dissidents,” describes how the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security interact with INTERPOL in inconsistent and





Will Interpol Reject Abusive Russian Requests Targeting Gary Kasparov?

A Russian court issued an arrest warrant for Gary Kasparov, former world chess champion and a co-founder of the Free Russia Forum, on a charge of creating and leading a “terrorist” group. The court charged a number of other exiled Russian activists on the same basis. On social media, Kasparov responded with an open inquiry to Interpol: “Are you still accepting Red Notices from Russia, and helping a police state persecute exiled dissidents?”

Ted R. Bromund discusses this case and its larger implications for Interpol’s handling of Red Notices from Russia on our Interpol Blog.

[Read more...](#)

Grossman Spoke at ECBA Spring Conference

Partner Sandra Grossman participated on a panel at the European Criminal Bar Association’s (ECBA) Spring Conference in Brussels. The panel, “Perspectives from the CCF, General Secretariat and Practitioners,” covered INTERPOL policy, due process issues, and international cooperation. With speakers from INTERPOL, the discussion offered the rare opportunity to hear directly from the Head of INTERPOL’s Notices and Diffusions Task Force (NDF) and the CCF Secretariat.



Sandra spoke alongside esteemed co-panelists Jago Russell, Yaron Gottlieb, Rebecca Niblock, and Raphael Nicolle.

GYH About Town

WOLA’s 50th Anniversary Gala

GYH Managing Partners Sandra Grossman and Becki Young were fabulously floral at Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)'s 50th Anniversary Gala! The evening was a beautiful celebration of the organization’s incredible journey and the remarkable individuals who shaped WOLA's legacy of advancing human rights in the Americas. Congratulations on 50 years of impactful work!



Lawyers Have Heart 5K & 10K Run and Fun Walk

GYH was proud to represent the immigration law community at the 2024 Lawyers Have Heart Race, hosted by the **American Heart Association**.



Networking with the Chambers of Commerce

Partner Becki Young & Director of Marketing Christina Kugel at the rooftop spring networking event co-hosted by the French American Chamber of Commerce, British American Chamber of Commerce, and Swedish American Chamber of Commerce.

A Celebration of Farmworkers

GYH was a proud sponsor of "From Harvest to Head Start: A Celebration of Farmworkers" at the Mexican Cultural Institute DC last weekend. This event was hosted by **The Foundation for Farmworkers** and East Coast Migrant Head Start Project. Representative Jamie Raskin was in attendance and shared his support for The Foundation's mission.



The Foundation raise funds to support three key ECMHSP initiatives:

1. Emergency financial assistance to ECMHSP families in need;
2. Legal assistance to farmworker DREAMers and ECMHSP DREAMers, and
3. Need-based education grants to ECMHSP parents.

If you are able to support the efforts of this amazing foundation, please donate [here](#).

Happy 50th Birthday to the Carlos Rosario School!

Happy 50th Birthday to the **Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School**! This incredible institution is the first adult education charter school in the country. Its mission is to prepare, educate, and empower tomorrow's diverse workforce, namely new immigrants in the U.S.

DC Mayor Muriel Bowser spoke about the immense impact of the school, highlighting its connection to the local hospitality industry in particular. As a firm with a focus on restaurant clients, we were thrilled to hear this support from local government.

It was an honor to attend this event and to hear the inspiring story of the school's longtime leader, Sonia Gutierrez. We look forward to many more anniversaries to come!

GYH was a proud sponsor of this meaningful celebration.



Firm News



Upcoming: Yeon Me Kim presenting for MSBA

Senior Attorney **Yeon Me Kim** will present at the upcoming 2024 Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) Legal Summit in Ocean City, MD from June 5th – 7th. Yeon Me will present on employment-based visa options available to U.S. employers.

Register for the conference [here](#).

Transnational Repression Seminar Presented to Covington



Co-Managing Partners **Becki Young** and **Sandra Grossman** presented a CLE course to Covington & Burling attorneys nationwide on the topic of Transnational Repression and the various humanitarian and business immigration solutions available to individuals in need of complex international protection.

GYH is happy to offer this CLE to other law firms. **Contact us** if you are interested in scheduling this CLE for your organization.



Sofia Hassander Presented about J-1 Visas to SACC

Attorney **Sofia Hassander** co-presented to the **Swedish American Chamber of Commerce** (SACC-DC) on the topic of J-1 visas. This informative webinar explained the J-1 process and the sponsorship services offered by the SACC.

GYH Ranked in Chambers & Partners Guides

GYH and its attorneys were again recognized by the 2024 **Chambers & Partners** USA and Global Guides. Chambers & Partners is the most prestigious global ranking systems for law firms. Rankings are determined by extensive research, including peer and client reviews.

[View Rankings](#)

Lawdragon Recognizes GYH Leaders

GYH leaders **Sandra Grossman**, **Becki Young**, and **Denise Hammond** were recognized by **Lawdragon** as among the top 100 immigration attorneys in the country in 2024.

View the list [here](#).

Do you need help Transcending BordersSM? [Contact us for a consultation.](#)

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