

One Minute Memo®



Trump Administration Implements Extreme Vetting Measures For Certain Visa Applicants Requiring Detailed Travel History And Social Media Information

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Seyfarth Synopsis: *The U.S. Department of State has recently issued a new supplemental questionnaire that will enable officers at U.S. Consulates and Embassies to carry out enhanced and burdensome screenings of certain applicants for nonimmigrant and immigrant visas to the U.S.*

As part of the Trump Administration's extreme vetting efforts, certain visa applicants will now be required to complete a rigorous supplemental questionnaire prior to visa issuance. The information requested in the new, supplemental questionnaire is extensive, and requires disclosure of the applicant's full travel history for the past 15 years, including locations visited, dates, and source of funds for the visits; all passport numbers; names and dates of birth of all siblings, children, and spouses/partners; complete address and dates of residence for the past 15 years; employment history for the past 15 years; and all social media handles, phone numbers and email addresses for the past 5 years.

Consular officers will not require all visa applicants to complete the supplemental questionnaire. As part of the visa application interview and screening process, consular officers will decide when the individual visa applicant's background warrants additional security checks. Previous travel by the visa applicant to areas controlled by terrorist groups is expected to make it more likely that the consular officer will request completion of the supplemental questionnaire. The U.S. Department of State estimates that approximately 65,000 people (less than 1% of 13 million visa applicants worldwide) may be requested to complete the supplemental questionnaire each year.

When a consular officer determines that the supplemental questionnaire is necessary, s/he is expected to inform the visa applicant, allow the applicant to complete the supplemental questionnaire offsite and email the completed document so that visa processing may resume. Although the supplemental questionnaire states that providing the requested information is voluntary, failure to provide the requested information will likely result in a denial of the visa application.

We expect that such extensive security screening of some visa applicants will increase uncertainty in visa application outcomes and contribute to delays in appointment availability and visa processing times at U.S. Consulates and Embassies worldwide. Use of the supplemental questionnaire has been approved through the end of November 2017 and is expected to be extended.

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