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Acronyms

Acronyms

You may notice a lot of acronyms being used in the discussion of U.S. immigration law. These are some of the most common immigration law acronyms you may have seen/heard. Any acronym used elsewhere in this wiki is defined below.

AAO The Administrative Appeals Office

Under authority that the Secretary of Homeland Security has delegated to USCIS, the AAO exercises appellate jurisdiction over approximately 50 different immigration case types filed with USCIS offices, as well as certain U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) determinations. Not every type of denied immigration benefit request may be appealed, and some appeals fall under the jurisdiction of the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), part of the U.S. Department of Justice.

ACC Assistant Chief Counsel

Government attorneys that represent the Department of Homeland Security, ICE at EOIR removal proceedings.

A Number / A File

“A” Number or “A” File is short for alien number or alien file. Every foreign national inside of the United States who has had contact with USCIS, ICE, or CBP will be issued an identifying A number, which will be used by the government as their file number and is how one can track their case or find information about their immigration matters.

AF Aggravated felony

AOS Adjustment of Status

Changing status from a nonimmigrant or no status to that of legal resident. This is the process by which a non-citizen obtains a green card when they are already in the United States.

AP

Advance parole travel document

BIA Board of Immigration Appeals

CBP Customs and Border Enforcement

A government agency created as part of the Department of Homeland Security Act in 2003. It replaced the legacy INS. CBP is primarily focused on border security and customs inspections at port of entry (like airports) as the name suggests. CBP does operate internally within the United States sometimes in states that are nowhere near any international borders.

CBP is a sub agency of DHS.

CAT Convention Against Torture

Article three of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is last resort form of a relief for a person who fears they will be in danger if they return to their home country. If the person is unable to obtain Asylum or Withholding of Removal, CAT will not confer any immigration benefit but the U.S. Government will not deport a person to their country of nationality if that person would be in danger there. This not discretionary and it cannot be denied to an alien with criminal convictions.

The agency that handles immigration appeals from the EOIR Immigration Court.

CIMT Crime involving moral turpitude

DACA Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program launched in 2012. For more information, go to the [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals 2017 Announcement page](#).

DED Deferred Enforced Departure (see glossary of terms for more info)

DHS Department of Homeland Security

The largest government agency in the United States, DHS is massive with an annual budget of hundreds of billions of dollars. It was created in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and came into existence in 2003. It includes ICE, CBP, and USCIS, among other agencies that will be less important for the purposes of this wiki.

DOJ Department of Justice

EAD Employment Authorization Document

A document that authorizes a person to legally take employment in the United States, commonly referred to as a work permit.

EOIR Executive Office of Immigration Review

The immigration court.

EWI Entry Without Inspection

When a person crosses the border at a location not so designated by the attorney general as a port of entry, and enters the United States without being formally inspected by immigration officials or without having a valid visa or travel document.

ESTA Electronic System for Travel Authorization

Entry to the US as a visitor from countries that are part of a visa waiver program and do not require visitors to obtain a visitor visa.

FOIA Freedom of Information Act

ICE Immigration & Customs Enforcement

ICE is the enforcement branch of DHS. It is the agency that apprehends and prosecutes non-citizens accused of violating United States immigration law.

ICE officers are who we contact when a person is apprehended by immigration. They handle the initial arrest and detention of non-citizens and the enforcement of the removal of non-citizens.

ICE attorneys represent DHS in removal proceedings.

IJ Immigration Judge

INA Immigration and Nationality Act

LPR Legal Permanent Resident

A legal permanent resident is a foreign national who obtained an immigrant visa and has been granted residency in the U.S. allowing them to permanently reside in the United States. Commonly referred to as a “green card”

NTA Notice to Appear

The NTA is the document that initiates removal proceedings. ICE will serve the noncitizen with the NTA which will contain the factual allegations and charges against them and provide a date, time, and location, for them to appear in Immigration Court. ICE then files that NTA with the Court and removal proceedings are commenced.

NOID Notice of Intent to Deny

NOIR Notice of Intent to Revoke

PD Prosecutorial discretion

The legal authority of DHS/ICE to choose whether or not to take action against an individual for committing an offense, in the removal context to pursue their removal from the United States.

PSG Particular Social Group

Asylum can be granted to a refugee who has been or fears they will be persecuted on the basis of their political beliefs, religion, nationality, race, or ***particular social group***. PSG is a sort of catch-all category for all other basis's for which a person can be granted asylum.

RFE Request for Evidence

ROP Record of Proceedings

SIJS Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

SIJS stands for “special immigrant juvenile status.” Special immigrant juvenile status is an immigrant visa program that provides a path to legal permanent residency to minors (under 21 and unmarried in NY and most other states) who have been abandoned, neglected, or abused **by ONE or both of their parents** and reunification with that parent is no longer possible because of said abandonment, neglect, or abuse

TPS Temporary Protective Status

USC United States Citizen

USCIS US Citizenship & Immigration Services

USCIS is the branch of DHS that deals with the granting of immigration benefits. USCIS is not concerned with the enforcement of laws or removal of non-citizens from the USCIS (unless they are violent criminals, terrorists, or individuals with very serious criminal convictions).

VAWA Violence Against Women Act

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