



# USCIS Update

Nov. 30, 2009

## **USCIS Will Exercise Parole Authority for Certain Foreign Nationals in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**

**WASHINGTON D.C.** - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today announced that it will grant parole status to eligible foreign nationals from certain impacted groups in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The groups are CNMI permanent residents, their immediate relatives, and the immediate relatives of citizens of the Compacts of Freely Associated States (the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands). USCIS will exercise this authority pursuant to section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The Consolidated Natural Resource Act of 2008 (CNRA), extends most provisions of U.S. immigration law to the CNMI beginning on Nov. 28, 2009. As of this date, foreign nationals in the CNMI will be considered present in the United States and subject to U.S. law. Starting Nov. 28, 2009, for two years, individuals lawfully present under CNMI law will be able to continue their employment authorization. The CNRA does not provide any U.S. immigration status to certain groups of foreign nationals living in the CNMI, however in implementing the CNRA, care should be given to minimize potential adverse economic effects on the CNMI and support future economic and business growth in the CNMI. In exercising this authority, USCIS seeks to effect Congressional intent by implementing a policy aimed at avoiding adverse economic and social consequences that would result from the removal of the affected individuals from the CNMI, absent some form of lawful status under U.S. law.

There are several advantages to using parole authority. Parole will place individual members of CNMI groups in lawful status under U.S. immigration law and permit employment authorization. Parole status will also allow for the issuance of advance parole when the individual seeks to depart the CNMI for a foreign destination. Travel to other parts of the United States, including Guam and the other territories, would not be authorized and would require a separate authorization by USCIS or Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Advance parole authorizations would only be valid for entry into the CNMI.