

2020 NEW RULES FOR GREEN CARD HOLDERS

By: Samantha A. Pepprock, Attorney

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is implementing new policies and rules that will affect green card holders or lawful permanent residents (LPR) starting this year.

These individuals need to be advised of these new changes:

- The rules regarding “abandonment” of your permanent resident status are stricter. In the past, if you remained in the U.S. more than six months out of the year, you could maintain your status as a lawful permanent resident. An official rule has not yet been released, but immigrants are advised to refrain from taking prolonged trips.
- Men between the age of 18 to 25 years with a green card must enroll in the selective service. Failure to do so can now lead to deportation (see www.sss.gov).
- The list of behaviors that constitute “crimes of moral turpitude” is being expanded. These behaviors may impact your eligibility for U.S. citizenship, and may even lead to deportation.
- Failure to identify yourself a LPR on your taxes or accurately report your income may now lead to deportation. **Note:** If you use an accountant to prepare your taxes, he/she may assume you are a U.S. citizen. It is your responsibility to correctly identify yourself.
- If LPRs do not want to live under the restrictions, once they meet satisfy the requirements of eligibility to apply for U.S. citizenship, there are a couple things that have changed on that application process as well:
 - The application fee for U.S. citizenship is nearly doubling, from \$640 to \$1,170.
 - The U.S. civics test, which is required in order to become a citizen, is being revised. The questions on the written test and the oral test may be more difficult to demonstrate English efficiency in the applicant.

If you have questions about this information or any other immigration questions, contact immigration attorney Samantha Pepprock at 231-724-4323 or spepprock@shrr.com.



Samantha Pepprock is an experienced attorney practicing primarily from the firm's Muskegon office. Samantha's practice is focused in the areas of real estate, estate planning and immigration law. Samantha is fluent in Spanish and very active in the community. Samantha may be reached at spepprock@shrr.com or 231-724-4323.