



NEW JERSEY STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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February 19, 2021

John Thompson, District Director
USCIS Field Office
Peter Rodino Federal Building
970 Broad Street
Newark, NJ 07102

Re: In-Person Proceedings at the Newark Field Office/
US Citizenship and Immigration Services

Dear District Director Thompson:

On behalf of the New Jersey State Bar Association, I want to share concerns expressed by our members about the activities at the Newark Field Office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). There appear to be consistent lapses in compliance with the COVID safety protocols in place for federal buildings, leaving visitors to the Peter Rodino Federal Building in Newark at risk for their own safety and the safety of individuals with whom they may come in contact.

Our members report that there are routinely unreasonably long lines outside of the building, suggesting that too many people are being scheduled to enter the building at the same time. We are advised users can be waiting in those lines for hours at a time, with no monitoring of mask-wearing or social distancing measures in the lines.

In addition, despite written guidelines on the USCIS website, our members report that there is no health screening and no temperature checking before individuals enter the building, and non-compliant social distancing employed for users once inside.

In many instances, individuals have no choice but to appear at the USCIS offices if they receive a notice to do so. They should not have to risk their health and safety to advance their immigration requests or protect their immigration status.

We urge you to promptly address these concerns, or raise them with the appropriate authority who can, to ensure compliance with federal and state safety protocols. Where possible, we urge you to implement remote appointments by USCIS, consistent with remote state and federal court proceedings, to reduce the number of potential visitors to the building and ensure the safety of all involved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kimberly A. Yonta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberly A. Yonta, Esq.
President

cc: Katy Kale, Acting Administrator, U.S. General Services Administration
Parimal Garg, Esq., Chief Counsel, New Jersey Governor's Office
Angela C. Scheck, NJSBA Executive Director
Domenick Carmagnola, Esq., NJSBA President-Elect