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USCIS Posts Warning Notice Regarding Social Media Vetting of Applicants

Legal Update

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This article was prepared with the assistance of ABIL, the Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers, of which Loan Huynh is an active member.

Raising free-speech concerns after the Trump administration's targeting of international students for participating in protests, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) posted a warning on X (formerly Twitter) stating that "EVERYONE should be on notice. If you're a guest in our country — act like it. Our robust social media vetting program to identify national security & public safety risks never stops. USCIS is on watch to find anything online that poses a threat to our nation & our way of life."

USCIS also recently announced that it would require visa and permanent residence applicants to disclose social media handles for "identity verification, vetting and national security screening." USCIS said it plans to include in certain application forms new sections requiring information about an applicant's online social media presence for five years preceding the filing of the application. The revised applications and petitions include Forms I-751 (Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence), I-485 (Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status), N-400 (Application for Naturalization), I-589 (Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal), I-192 (Application for Advance Permission to Enter as a Nonimmigrant), I-829 (Petition by Investor to Remove Conditions on Permanent Resident Status), I-730 (Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition), I-590 (Registration for Classification as a Refugee), and I-131 (Application for Travel Document). These sections ask for the names of the "Provider/Platform" and "Social Media Identifier" used by the applicant, USCIS said.