



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

2018-062 | April 10, 2018

United States - State Department Seeking Visa Applicant Disclosure of Social Media History

In an expansion of the information requested of U.S. visa applicants, the Federal Register posted notices from the U.S. Department of State on March 30, 2018, proposing to add questions for **immigrant and nonimmigrant visa applicants** about social media platforms they used in the past five years.¹ The public has 60 days to comment on the revised procedures. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will subsequently approve or reject the proposal.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Foreign nationals need to be aware the government may soon be able to ask most U.S. visa applicants for their social media details and screen their social media activity. Thus, foreign nationals will need to prepare for the possibility that they will be asked to gather all social media, in addition to travel, work and residence history details before U.S. visa appointments.

The government may seek additional information such as five years of previously used telephone numbers, email addresses, and international travel; whether the applicant has been deported or removed from any country; and whether specified family members have been involved in terrorist activities. These additional background checks and heightened scrutiny could potentially result in visa issuance delays and denials.

Background

Previously, in May 2017, the OMB approved the State Department's request to collect social media identifiers only when they determined such information was necessary to "confirm identity or conduct more rigorous national security vetting" but only from applicants deemed to pose a potential risk of terrorism.

© 2018 KPMG Law LLP, a tax and immigration law firm affiliated with KPMG LLP, each of which is a Canadian limited liability partnership. KPMG LLP is a Canadian limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG network of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Cooperative ("KPMG International"), a Swiss entity. All rights reserved.

Enhanced Social Media Vetting

This new proposal, supporting the Trump Administration's policy of "extreme vetting" of foreign nationals, if approved, will now require U.S. visa applicants to disclose all social media identities they have used in the past five years, along with phone numbers, email addresses and international travel during the past five years. The administration anticipates that this policy will affect approximately 15 million non-immigrants and immigrants to the United States. According to the State Department, the policy provides exemptions for diplomatic and official visas.

Our office is tracking this matter closely and will provide you with an update in the upcoming weeks.

FOOTNOTE:

1 See the Federal Register posted notices from the U.S. Department of State on March 30, 2018, [click here](#) for nonimmigrant visas, and [click here](#) for immigrant visas.

* * * *

Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Canada:



Charles Gillman
Senior Manager/Senior Attorney,
U.S. Immigration
KPMG Law LLP – Tax + Immigration,
Canada
Tel. +1-416-943-7882
cgillman@kpmg.ca



Mira Khalid
Associate/Attorney,
U.S. Immigration
KPMG Law LLP – Tax + Immigration,
Canada
Tel. +1-416-943-7830
mirakhalid@kpmglaw.ca

* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not provide any immigration services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Canada.

© 2018 KPMG Law LLP, a tax and immigration law firm affiliated with KPMG LLP, each of which is a Canadian limited liability partnership. KPMG LLP is a Canadian limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG network of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Cooperative (“KPMG International”), a Swiss entity. All rights reserved.

www.kpmg.com

kpmg.com/socialmedia



© 2018 KPMG LLP, a Delaware limited liability partnership and the U.S. member firm of the KPMG network of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Cooperative (“KPMG International”), a Swiss entity. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. NDPPS 530159

The KPMG name and logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of KPMG International.

The KPMG logo and name are trademarks of KPMG International. KPMG International is a Swiss cooperative that serves as a coordinating entity for a network of independent member firms. KPMG International provides no audit or other client services. Such services are provided solely by member firms in their respective geographic areas. KPMG International and its member firms are legally distinct and separate entities. They are not and nothing contained herein shall be construed to place these entities in the relationship of parents, subsidiaries, agents, partners, or joint venturers. No member firm has any authority (actual, apparent, implied or otherwise) to obligate or bind KPMG International or any member firm in any manner whatsoever. The information contained in herein is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. Although we endeavor to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. No one should act on such information without appropriate professional advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation.

Flash Alert is a GMS publication of KPMG LLP’s Washington National Tax practice. To view this publication or recent prior issues online, please click [here](#). To learn more about our GMS practice, please visit us on the Internet: click [here](#) or go to <http://www.kpmg.com>.