

Immigration Law Alert - The White House Reports Extension of Certain Immigration Programs

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On Friday, Sept. 28, 2012, the President signed into law **S.3245**, a bill that reauthorizes for three years the **Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program**, **EB-5 Regional Center Program**, the **E-Verify Program**, and the **Special Immigrant Non-minister Religious Worker Program**.

The four programs granted extensions do the following:

- The Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver program assists medical doctors studying in the United States on J-1 status. Each state receives 30 J-1 visa waivers for foreign medical graduates each fiscal year. A J-1 visa waiver eliminates the requirement that a J-1 physician return to his or her home country for two years before applying for a permanent U.S. visa.
- The EB-5 Regional Center program is available to foreign investors who make a capital contribution of \$500,000 or \$1,000,000 (depending on the geographic location) in a U.S. business that creates 10 full-time jobs for American workers. In exchange for job creation, the foreign investors are conferred permanent resident status.
- The E-Verify program assists employers in verifying the employment eligibility of its employees.
- The Special Immigrant Religious Worker program provides a path to permanent residence for religious workers in the United States. The religious workers can hold a professional or non-professional position within their religious vocation and obtain permanent resident status.

The legislation extends these programs through Sept. 30, 2015. These programs were slated to expire Sept. 30, 2012, but have been extended for decades, so reauthorization will likely continue in years to come.

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National Law Review, Volume II, Number 276

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