

NEW MEXICO IMMIGRATION LAWYER BLOG

PUBLISHED BY
COLLINS & COLLINS, P.C.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

December 19, 2009

REAL ID Act Deadline Extended: Passport Not Needed for New Mexico Holiday Travelers

The Department of Homeland Security has extended the deadline for State compliance with the REAL ID Act. The extension of the deadline will save New Mexico travelers, as well as travelers from 30 other non-compliant states, from the need for passports for domestic air travel over the holidays.

Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, had resisted announcing the extension despite the written and verbal requests for clarification by both New Mexico Senators Bingaman and Udall. This refusal to extend the policy has made many New Mexico travelers very nervous.

More than that, the refusal to extend made the elected officials of many states very nervous, and not just those that were non-compliant. The year-end holiday season is the busiest time of year for air travel. A disruption in the air travel would have had significant economic consequences on the nation. This unnecessary disruption would have compounded an already faltering economy. Further setbacks in the economy through the disruption of travel would have been inexcusable.

Fortunately, Homeland Security has seen the light. The deadline is now extended to May 10, 2011. Thus the debate will return to the constitutionality of the Act and the significant invasion of privacy that it will entail.

New Mexico will feel the impact of the Act more than most. The REAL ID Act basically will require a federally approved identification card for every person that wishes to enter federal facilities, including passage through airport security. New Mexico has a very large percentage of folks employed by federal employers such as the Air Force bases, national labs, courts, post offices, and other federal facilities. The December 31, 2009 deadline would have done far more than keep New Mexicans off planes, it would have kept them home from work in the new year.

**Main Office:
400 Gold Ave. SW
Suite 500
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 242-5958**

<http://www.newmexicoimmigrationlawyerblog.com/>