



TEXAS TARGETS IMMIGRATION SCAMS

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

EVERY YEAR, COUNTLESS FOREIGN NATIONALS pursue the opportunity to legally reside in America. Whether they arrive with student visas or temporary work permits, these law-abiding immigrants follow the proper procedures and comply with the law so they do not jeopardize their presence in our country.

Unfortunately, a few unscrupulous scam artists are preying upon these legal immigrants. Exploiting immigrants' desire to legally obtain resident status or extend their visa, scammers falsely claim they have the authority to provide immigration-related legal services, but all too often they do not. This not only harms law-abiding immigrants, but it also undermines immigration laws by sending the wrong message to those who attempt to play by the rules.

Scammers who falsely call themselves "immigration consultants" have long exploited the misunderstanding between the term "notary" and the similar-sounding Spanish term "notario," which is commonly used in Latin America to refer to highly specialized attorneys.

Texas law bars a notary public from preparing immigration documents or implying that a notary public is an attorney licensed to practice law. Notaries face criminal prosecution if they use the words "notario" or "notario público" to advertise their services.

In Texas, notaries public are authorized to witness the execution of certain legal documents, such as contracts or wills. Texas law specifically prohibits notaries public from providing

immigration services unless they are a licensed attorney or accredited by the U.S. Department of Justice's Board of Immigration Appeals.

While the OAG cannot help immigrants obtain residency status, the agency will pursue fraudulent notarios for breaking the law. For additional information or to file a complaint against a suspected unauthorized legal services operation, contact the Office of the Attorney General at (800) 252-8011 or visit the Web site at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov. Assistance is available in English and Spanish.

Individuals who need assistance with residency issues can call the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

POINTS TO REMEMBER



IMMIGRATION SCAMS

- Contact the Texas State Bar to verify a consultant is a licensed attorney.
- Notaries public are NOT authorized to offer legal services. Only a U.S. licensed attorney or accredited representative is authorized and qualified to assist with legal status.

For more information or assistance with legal status or a list of accredited representatives:
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)
(800) 375-5283 • www.uscis.gov

To report notary public or immigration fraud:
Office of the Attorney General
(800) 252-8011
www.texasattorneygeneral.gov



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