

How can I ensure my Thai fiancée receives competent legal advice?

In Thailand, as well as many other countries outside of the United States, there is a strong desire amongst the general population to move to the United States. An unfortunate side effect of this major demand for visas and travel documents is a proliferation of “visa companies,” and bogus “immigration lawyers.” Many of those claiming to be experts in American Immigration are simply not entitled to practice United States Immigration law. A question on the minds of many US Citizens with Thai loved ones is: “How do I ensure the best legal advice for my Thai fiancée?” The short answer to this question: make certain that you and your Thai fiancée are dealing with a licensed U.S. attorney.

The above paragraph begs the question: how can I tell if my Thai fiancée is receiving legal advice from a competent credible professional? The answer: when in doubt, card them. Much like a bartender asking someone for ID who appears less than 21 years of age, prospective clients should never be too shy to ask their prospective attorney for a copy of his or her bar card or other certificate in order to authenticate their credentials. Further, ask the attorney what law school they graduated from and in which state he or she is licensed and in good standing to practice law. If the person in question evades the inquiry or becomes hostile, then this might be a sign that the person is hiding something...Possibly something very serious. If he or she provides the name of their state of licensure, then go to the internet and search for the bar association or Supreme Court of that state. Every state maintains a database listing all of the attorneys licensed in their jurisdiction. If the “attorney” is not on this list, then further inquiry may be required. At that point, any reasonable person would ask themselves, “Am I willing to trust my Thai fiancée” to someone who would lie to me about whether they are actually a lawyer or not?”

United States Immigration rules and regulations are a complex and constantly changing area of American law. On the surface, United States immigration may appear to be a straightforward endeavor and there are those who claim the [K1 visa](#) process is merely an exercise of “filling in forms.” However, upon further investigation, one will quickly see that it is a narrow and deep area of legal practice, filled with pitfalls for the unwary. Failure to be one hundred percent honest in an application can lead to unintended consequences. Ask yourself, “can I put my Thai Fiancée in the hands of someone who tells me to lie to the U.S. Government?” Further, ignorance of relevant immigration rules and deadlines can lead an unwitting couple into a situation where they are unable to achieve their immigration goals in the time frame they desire. When hiring an Immigration Attorney stay away from so-called “visa companies,” and “visa specialists,” as they are unsanctioned by the Immigration authorities at USCIS. The operators to be most on the lookout for often use the even more sinister tactic of claiming to be an actual attorney when in fact they are unlicensed and often have not even graduated from an accredited law school in the US. This type of unscrupulous individual should be avoided at all costs, if for no other reason than the fact that if problems arise with the application only a licensed attorney can explain the situation to the authorities at USCIS. Further, only a licensed attorney will have the credibility to provide follow-up documentation in a [221 g denial](#) at the Embassy. In either case, qualifications count and the difference between a properly trained, licensed US attorney and a fly-by-night operator can be quickly determined merely by doing some due diligence and checking the individual’s credentials.

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