

## Sequestration and Visa Adjudications

The automatic spending cutback ("sequestration") took place March 1, 2013, at 11:59 EST.

The Department of State (DOS) has warned that sequestration will result in diminished consular services, including visa adjudications, because the number of officers processing visa applications will be reduced. DOS representatives stated during a press briefing on February 27<sup>th</sup> that "one of the areas that there'll be an impact on ... is our ability provide consular services ... [I]t took a lot of effort to get us to reduce those wait times, and a lot of new hiring, a lot of new staff." There is a very real possibility of delays in the visa application process, which means foreign national employees would experience delays outside the U.S. and may not be able to assume, or return to, their jobs in a timely fashion.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Attorney General Eric Holder warned that the sequestration may undermine domestic security efforts, affecting security on the U.S.-Mexico border due to the loss of about 5,000 border agents and creating long waits at U.S. airports and other ports of entry.

"If this so-called 'sequester' goes into effect," Holder said, "it will not only curtail the department's ability to support our state and local partners, it will have a negative impact on the safety of Americans across the country."

The nation's top law enforcement officer said of the loss of federal aid to local law enforcement agencies: "[T]here's no question that the effects of these cuts ... on our entire justice system, and on the American people will be profound."

The U.S. Department of Labor has [posted a website](#) for employers to assist DOL employees who may be impacted by budget reductions required by sequestration.