



**AMERICAN CITIZENS ABROAD**  
EDUCATE, ADVOCATE AND INFORM

**Washington, DC**  
**October 22, 2020**

**ACA continues advocacy amidst US Government offices in lockdown.**

American Citizens Abroad, Inc. (ACA) continues its important advocacy work on behalf of Americans living and working overseas amidst lockdown of US Government offices with virtual meetings and issuing communications on legislation and regulatory updates.

Recently ACA wrote to Carl Risch, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, about disruption of US Citizens Services such as; Certificates for Births Abroad, first time applications for Social Security numbers, passport applications/renewals and other services that have been impacted by the closure and reduced staffing at US Embassies and Consulates worldwide. Read ACA's letter [here](#).

"ACA understands that the US State Department has been working under difficult and unusual circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic however, some of the issues and concerns pre-date the pandemic," said Marylouise Serrato, ACA Executive Director. US State Department outreach to the overseas Americans community is important for vital services. Congressional leadership has voiced this with legislation such as the [H.R. 6595, the Expanding Vital American Citizen Services Overseas \(EVACS\) Act of 2020](#) introduced by Representative Joaquin Castro and Senator Edward Markey.

The problem of procurement of Social Security numbers for individuals who need to provide these to their foreign banks for the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act's (FATCA) reporting purposes has been an on-going problem and has gotten worse given the shutdown and reduced staffing at US Embassies and Consulates. "Delays in the procurement of Social Security numbers is leaving some Americans overseas without access to simple financial tools such as bank and investment accounts," added Jonathan Lachowitz, ACA Chairman.

ACA also submitted commentary to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) noting its concerns with recent proposed rule changes to Form 1-864 (Affidavit of Support) for US-citizen sponsorship of family member immigrants. Read ACA's full submission [here](#). One of the requirements for the proposed new rules calls for submission of a credit report which, for Americans overseas, may be impossible to produce. "Many foreign countries do not use credit reports or even have a comparable document. ACA is concerned about the effect of this on those US citizens who are contemplating legal repatriation with their non-US citizen family members" said Karl Jauch, ACA Executive Committee member.

ACA's work to keep up communications with key offices in the Administration and Legislature continues even during the pandemic. ACA's communications are resulting in follow-up conference calls and virtual meetings. "It isn't an ideal way to advocate, but ACA is committed to staying connected with Capitol Hill and keeping focus on our wide range of issues. Once the election has been held, ACA will evaluate whatever changes are made in leadership and adjust our advocacy efforts accordingly. Keeping contact with current champions and key offices is important to that future work," added Charles Bruce, ACA Legal Counsel.

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