



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 5, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to explain the unique immigration privileges enjoyed by citizens of the Republic of Palau. Palau is a sovereign state in the western Pacific Ocean, located between Guam and the Philippines. On September 27, 1994, President Clinton signed Presidential Proclamation 6726, ending the United States' administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and making effective Public Law 99-658, the Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Republic of Palau.

Under the Compact, most citizens of Palau (but not alien spouses or children who are not Palauan citizens) enjoy unique immigration privileges. They may work, study and reside in the United States in non-immigrant status without a U.S. visa. Palauan citizens may remain in the United States indefinitely, and should be afforded all privileges – including access to a drivers license or employment – usually granted to other foreign citizens in the United States in status.

Citizens of the Republic of Palau arriving in the United States are required to possess an appropriate travel document, which could be a birth certificate or a passport, and are issued I-94s at the U.S. port of entry. These I-94s are marked with the traveler's citizenship but do not indicate a date when their status ends, because their status is indefinite. Palauans working in the United States must be registered with the Social Security Administration and, therefore, should possess and be able to produce a Social Security Card. In order to satisfy employers' documentation requirements of the I-9 form, most Palauans will seek an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the Department of Homeland Security. The EAD is not strictly required for employment, however, Palauans must have sufficient documentation to allow their employer to fully and accurately complete the I-9 form.

The State Department recognizes that individual State authorities will determine which forms of identification are acceptable for various privileges. However, you may wish to consider establishing separate rules for Palauan citizens in recognition of the unique relationship the United States enjoys with the Republic of Palau.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of this information further. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Micah L. Watson
Australia, New Zealand and Pacific
Island Affairs
Rm 4206, Truman Bldg
Washington, DC 20520