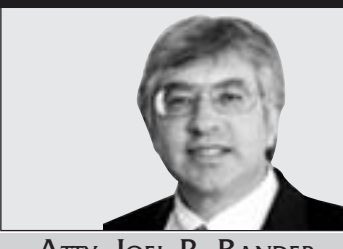


PROTECTING RIGHT & \$



ATTY. JOEL R. BANDER

YOU can bring your family to the United States if you are a US citizen, Legal Permanent Resident or US non-immigrant.

A US citizen or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) needs to file Form I-130 immigrant petition for the alien relative. Visas are immediately available for the parents, spouses and unmarried minor children of a US citizen. Any unmarried son or daughter of a US citizen 21 years of age

and above will have to wait 6-16 years (depending on your country of chargeability) before visas become available. For the married son or daughter and siblings of a US citizen the waiting period may even take longer. Legal Permanent Residents can also bring their spouses and unmarried minor children but the waiting period is 4-7 years depending on which country they were born. They can also petition for their unmarried son or daughter 21 years or age and above but cannot petition married children, parents, brothers or sisters. US non-immigrants (such as students, specialty workers, intracompany transferees, trainees, etc.) can also bring their loved ones to the United States.

There are no numerical limits or processing delays related with dependent visas. Medical examination is also not required. Immediate relatives of US citizens (parents, spouses and unmarried minor children) are not subject to numerical limitation but it may take 8-12 months before the relative can obtain his/her immigrant visa. The process may take longer if required additional documents are not submitted promptly. Some Consular Officers may require DNA testing if birth records presented are insufficient. As part of the regular process, the relatives of US citizens and Legal Permanent Residents will be required to take medical examination prior to their interview. Certain health issues and

How do I bring my family to the US?

presence of illegal drugs found in the system of the applicant may cause further delay or denial of the application. Criminal conviction is also another cause for denial and possible lifetime bar. Petitioning a relative seems easy but lack of knowledge about the process could turn money, effort and time spent on the case into tremendous frustration. That is why it is very important to consult with lawyers or people who have the knowledge, experience and qualification to ensure success of your application.

Bander Law Firm, LLP has been providing immigration services for over 15 years and has multilingual staff who can communicate effectively in Tagalog, Spanish, Sinhala, Farsi and Mandarin. Our firm provides free initial consultation on immigration matters, except criminal-related matters. Please feel free to call Bander Law Firm, LLP at 213-873-4333 to schedule your free initial consultation. To learn more about immigration concerns and read previous columns, visit www.BanderLaw.com.

Atty. Joel R. Bander is the partner of Bander Law Firm, LLP. With over 15 years of litigation and immigration experience, Mr. Bander is a leading litigator and accomplished trial strategist. He has successfully handled numerous cases before Federal, State, Civil, and Criminal Judges and has participated in hundreds of arbitrations and trials. Bander Law Firm, LLP Downtown office address: 1055 W. 7th Street, Suite 1950, Los Angeles, CA, 90017. Tel: (213) 873-4333 Fax: (213) 873-4334. San Gabriel Office address: 1045 E. Valley Blvd., #A215, San Gabriel, CA 91776. Email: info@bandlerlaw.com. (Advertising Supplement)

MINDING YOUR FINANCES



ATTY. RAYMOND BULAON

AS our economy continues to crumble, foreclosures continue to rise at an unprecedented rate. Distressed homeowners struggle to keep their homes as they desperately look for possible solutions. A lot of people are trying to get their loan modified by their lender but for most, the process has been extremely frustrating.

A loan modification is simply changing one or more terms of your loan that allows you to bring your account current (if you are delinquent) and to make your payment more affordable. It is not the same as refinancing where you need to obtain a new loan to pay off your current loan. Thus, it doesn't require that you have "good" credit. As a matter of fact, people who need loan modification are usually people whose credit has already been damaged by late payments. In loan modification, the terms that can be changed depend on what type of loan you have. For example, if you have an adjustable rate mortgage (which is what most of the problems loans are), you may be able to change your loan to a fixed-rate loan. If you have a fixed-rate loan, you may be able to lower the rate so that the payments can be lowered accordingly. In some cases, you may extend your loan term from 30 to 40 years. Principal reductions,

Loan modification: Do it yourself or get help?

though rare, may sometimes be granted. Although you don't necessarily need an attorney to do a loan modification with your lender, having an attorney negotiate on your behalf does have its advantages and may significantly increase your chances of success. The reason is that the loan modification process requires a careful analysis of your circumstances, facts concerning your finances and the property in question, an understanding of what your lender may be looking for and most importantly, legal options that may be available to you if all else fails. Sometimes, what also further complicates the process is that the decision is not always made by the lender who owns the loan. Instead the decision is made by a group of investors who own a part of the mortgage-backed security. These investors decide based on what helps them further reduce their losses, not based on what serves you best, although your "hardship" impacts that decision. Thus, it is not only important to present a strong case to the lender in order to get your application approved but it is just as important to have an attorney on your side who can help protect your legal interests during negotiations with the lender. A lot of people also get frustrated trying to do it on their own because the process requires a series of time-consuming phone calls made to the lender, hours of being put on hold and speaking to lender representatives who don't even understand your file or know what they are doing. In

my opinion, a lot of these lenders are terribly understaffed or poorly staffed with individuals who are often overburdened with more files than they can handle. So unless you are adequately prepared with the right information to present your case and able to effectively communicate to your lender why a loan modification is in their best interest, you are probably wasting your time and not helping your situation at all. There is no telling where this current economic crisis ends. The Obama administration has recently unveiled a housing plan which includes financial incentives to lenders who will work with borrowers to voluntarily modify their loan. Given the scale of the crisis, the question still remains whether this will be enough. A few lenders have at least already expressed willingness to modify loans for borrowers who meet certain criteria. A loan modification is only one of the many options that may be available to you if you are struggling with mortgage payments and/or facing foreclosure. Again, consulting with an attorney may help you explore options you didn't even know existed. For a free consultation, please call our office at Toll-Free 1-866-477-7772. We have offices in Glendale, Cerritos and West Covina. (Advertising Supplement)

DEBT RELIEF



ATTY. LAWRENCE YANG

CONGRESS passed the "Cram down" bill last Thursday. This is the much awaited legislative portion of the Obama plan that would amend bankruptcy law to empower bankruptcy judges to modify mortgages by cutting the balance on trust deeds to equal the current fair market value of the residence, extend the payment period of the mortgage, reduce mortgage payment and reduce mortgage interest. Presumably, this would be done in a chapter 13, not a chapter 7. This is an effective alternative to loan modification negotiations, which is purely voluntary on the part of creditors. Homeowners are presently at the mercy of creditors when they want their mortgages modified. Creditors can pick and choose which loans they want to modify even if the bank has received bail out funds from the Federal government through TARP. Nationally, half of homeowners who apply for loan modifications are able to obtain some reduced payment while the other half actually end up with higher mortgage payments through current loan modification practice. The fact that the mortgage is owned by several hundred creditors since the security has been diced up and sold to many investors has made getting a consensus a nightmare. Further, the latest program of the administra-

Congress passes BK Amendment to force loan modifications

tion, offers refinancing of under water loans if the balance of the mortgage does not exceed 105% of current fair market value of the residence. In California, practically all of the residences bought with zero down 80/20 loans in the last 4 years, which are under water, do not qualify for refinancing under this guideline. Many property values here have suffered 30% to 40% price reductions. Governor Schwarzenegger signed a bill into law two weeks ago giving temporary relief to homeowners facing foreclosure. This is not a permanent solution but it helps. The law freezes foreclosures for 90 days and requires creditors to work out a meaningful loan modification with homeowners to allow them to make affordable payments before they can proceed with foreclosure. It is interesting to note how creditors will prove that a meaningful loan modification has been attempted. I guess creditors will resort to affidavits stating that they have tried to contact homeowners to negotiate a loan modification plan but has not been successful in contacting homeowner to satisfy the requirement of proving the attempt before foreclosure can start, while homeowner will argue that no attempt by creditor has been made, to delay the foreclosure further. No doubt this is a political ploy to show the public that the government does not want homeowners to lose their houses. It is a sad fact that many citizens are actually losing their jobs or have to accept reductions in income to keep their jobs. Faced with an ever deepening recession on one hand, and a bank-

ing sector that is falling apart, many homeowners actually cannot afford to make payments on a house. But in the meantime, homeowners facing foreclosure are well advised to stay put in their houses. With so many laws coming out to help homeowners keep their houses, I would not be surprised if homeowners are eventually able to keep their houses for free without making any payments. At that time, we would have made the complete transition from a democracy to communism where the government can require the rich to give all their money to the poor. This is really what's going on with all the foreclosure prevention laws. The money of creditors is being given to the homeowners who cannot afford to keep the houses. The Senate is expected to provide their own version of the "Cram down" bill soon possibly next month. The final version to be presented to the president could be signed into law as early as April. This means that by May or June debtors can file chapter 13 to have their mortgages modified by force and have their loan balances reduced to the current fair market value of their residences. If you need debt relief, contact my office. I will analyze your case personally. (Advertising Supplement)

HOME BUYERS



KENNETH GO

FHA Short Refinancing is the process of refinancing your current mortgage(s) into a new FHA 30 year fixed rate mortgage for up to 97.75% of your homes current value (many times closing costs may be included). Many lenders are accepting short refinance payoffs because it is more cost effective than foreclosure proceedings. Foreclosure is an expensive solution for a lender for loans in default; not only does the lender not receive payments for up to a year, but they may lose out on fees associated with the procedure. A FHA Short Refinance Payoff is just one of several alternatives that might be more cost effective for your lender(s). FHA Short Refinance also allows borrowers to keep their home and allows them to reduce to loan balance to current market value. For me, this is for someone who might have gotten their overtime income reduced, might have lost their second job, definitely a plus if they have an Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM) Loan or might have a fixed rate mortgage higher than 7%. Always remember that there are a lot of programs out there to help struggling hom-

Who can qualify for 'Short Refinancing', reducing your loan balance?

owners. Two most important at the same time difficult guidelines they require is to qualify for : 1) Hardship and 2) to qualify for the new loan. Sometimes, your reason for your hardship is because of your income and expenses, so that is why it's like a chicken and egg situation. If you make too much money you might not qualify for hardship. So, make sure when you are calling your lender you have all your financial information ready and you should analyze your own situation before getting too frustrated with your lenders. For homeowners with ARM rates that have sky rocketed and they are still paying on their mortgages, this might be something for you. Here are the guidelines for this program: Must be current on mortgage payments. Minimum middle credit score is 540. No more than one 30 day late mortgage payment in last 12 months. Primary residence only. Must have sufficient documented income to qualify for the new lower loan amount (no stated income). FHA up front mortgage insurance premium 1.75% (will be added to the new loan) and an-

nual premium of .55% will be included in the new monthly mortgage payment. Must be struggling to make mortgage payments. I have spoken to a few lenders and have confirmed this to be an option for homeowners who qualifies to finally reduce their rates and loan balances to keep their home. So, call me to get an evaluation to see if you can qualify for this program. In regards to the New Obama Stimulus Loan Package that came out on March 4, 2009. Most lenders still don't have the actual requirements yet. Please go to these websites to see if you can qualify, once I get more information I will inform you. Here are the websites: http://www.ustreas.gov/news/index1.html http://financialstability.gov/makinghomeaffordable/index.html To get more details, please call Ken Go of 1st Innovative Finance Group (562) 697-7028 or write to: kennethgo@verizon.net (Advertising Supplement)



ATTENTION NURSES AND OTHER HOSPITAL OR HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES!

- Are you paid different hourly rates for the same job, depending on whether you are assigned an 8-hour shift or a 12-hour shift?
Are you paid a fixed salary and work more than 8 hrs a day or more than 40 hrs a week?
When you work more than 8 hours a day or more than 40 hours a week, are you paid only your regular hourly rate and not the overtime premium rate?
Are you unable to take a meal break even though you work more than five hours in a day?
Are you classified at work as an independent contractor without employee benefits although you are supervised by your employer?

If you answered YES to any of the questions above, you may be entitled to additional compensation. We can help you. Contact the LAW OFFICES OF C. JOE SAYAS, JR. Attorneys Helping Employees, Consumers, & Policyholders

700 N. CENTRAL AVENUE, SUITE 235 GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA 91203 Telephone (818) 291-0088

Your inquiries are welcome. No recovery, no fee.

USCIS prepares for H-1B filing...

is not a travel document. In order to travel and reenter the United States in H-1B status, a visa must be obtained at a US Embassy or consulate abroad. The number and types of occupations that will qualify people for classification as H-1B professional workers are constantly expanding. With the development of so many new highly specialized occupations in the high-tech industries, more and more H-1Bs are neces-

sary to fill the demand, and to maintain the status quo for more traditional occupations such as accountants and engineers. Although certain categories of workers are exempt from the H-1B cap, there is no doubt that the 65,000 H-1B visas available for most jobs in "specialty occupations" will be used up by mid-Summer. With that in mind, employers desiring to hire professional workers under the H-1B category would do well to file

their Petitions early, and file them properly, or risk being shut-out until April 1, 2010 when the quota reopens for FY 2011. Daniel P. Hanlon is a California State Bar Certified Specialist in Immigration and Nationality Law and a principal of Hanlon Law Group, PC, located at 225 S. Lake Ave., 11th Floor in Pasadena, California; tel. No. (626) 585-8005. Hanlon Law Group, PC is a "full-service Immigration Law firm." E-mail: visas@hanlon-greene.com and www.hanlon-greene.com (Advertising Supplement)