

# IAC Meeting Notes

Saturday, December 17, 2016 - 10:30am - 12:45pm

Helena DaSilva Hughes - Immigrants Assistance Center (host)

<http://www.immigrantsassistancecenter.org/contact/>

Schuyler Pisha, Legal Services Director, Catholic Social Services, Fall River

<http://www.cssdioc.org/about/administration.html>

Rita Resende, Watt & Sylvia, Immigration Lawyer

<http://www.wattandsylvia.com/>

Rita also does work with

AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association)

<http://aila.org/>

PAIR (Political Asylum/Immigration Representation)

<http://pairproject.org/>

UMASS Immigration Litigation Clinic

<http://www.umassd.edu/law/academics/clinics/immigration-litigation/>

Marcony Almeida-Barros, Director of Community Engagement,  
Executive Bureau of the Attorney General

<http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2015/2015-05-19-community-engagement.html>

There were about 30 people in the audience. Most were concerned about changes likely to occur in the incoming Trump administration. Schuyler Pisha allayed some initial concerns by telling the audience that there were some things Trump could do on Day One, others that might be changed, and yet others that were almost impossible to change. He also reminded the audience that President Obama had deported 2.5 to 3.0 million people, most intercepted at the border. Some of these were due to retroactive enforcement of the 1996 Immigration Reform Law Act, which required deportation of relatively minor offenses, even for Permanent Residents and those who had spent decades in the United States. Helena DaSilva Hughes pointed out that most of the offenses she sees are substance abuse charges (not trafficking).

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/obamas-deportation-policy-numbers/story?id=41715661>

<http://www.scotusblog.com/2012/04/opinion-analysis-court-rejects-retroactive-application-of-1996-immigration-law-amendment/>

Things that Trump can change out of the gate:

- DACA (Deferred Action Child Arrival)
- TPS (Temporary Protected Status - Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras, Syria, others)
- How deportations are prioritized. He cited the case of the Michael Bianco raid)
- Threatening federal funding of "Sanctuary Cities" -- which New Bedford is not
- Mandating the deputization of local police as ICE officers

<https://www.dhs.gov/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temporary\\_protected\\_status](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temporary_protected_status)

<https://www.usimmigrationsupport.org/visa-u.html>

<https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/special-immigrant-juveniles/special-immigrant-juveniles-sij-status>

<https://immigrationlawnj.com/ten-year-immigration-law/>

Things that are unlikely to be overturned:

- U-Visa (victims of crime who testify)
- Special Immigrant Juveniles (SIJ) status
- Family sponsorship (path to a Green Card)
- The "Ten Year Law" (which was established law long before Obama)

Things almost impossible to change without throwing away the Constitution:

- Arrest without cause
- Right to remain silent
- Right to a lawyer
- Right to privacy (authorities can only enter with an invitation or a warrant)
- The right to a hearing before deportation

Pisha discussed what immigrants should do if stopped by authorities:

- what to do when asked for ID
- to remain silent / and not to lie
- to examine warrants for correct person and correct address
- to make sure warrant is served on correct person
- what to do if ICE comes to your workplace

Pisha warned the audience of the many scams and unreputable "experts" preying on the vulnerable. A few warning signs:

- makes extravagant claims or guarantees of getting a Green Card or resolving a problem
- is vague when describing exactly what he's going to do for you - visa, asylum, special permit?

Common scams:

- special offers from "Immigration" websites: \$1000 for your Green Card
- selling government forms (when they're all free)
- fake websites (should all end in \*.gov)
- immigration services performed by a tax preparation agency, notary, or travel agent

- a particular lawyer in Cambridge who promises to get immigrants an "employer-sponsored" Green Card using the 245I program (which ended in 2001)

Finally, Marcony Almeida gave a brief outline of services the AG's office provided. "You have rights," he told everyone. "And you have a state agency to help you."

- If you work, you get paid
- If your civil rights are violated (including police, discrimination, or housing), call us
- If you have consumer issues, call us
- If you have landlord problems, call us
- If you have insurance fraud issues, call us
- If you have auto insurance claims problems, call us
- We have people who speak 25 different languages
- We have a HATE Hotline