

Hot Topics in Hotlanta

Georgia-Alabama Chapter Conference 2019

W Atlanta Midtown
188 14th Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30361

Thursday, February 14th

7:00am - 5:00pm

**Registration and Exhibitors
Great Room Foyer**

A light breakfast will be served between 7:00am and 8:00am.

8:00am - 9:00am

**Welcome and Keynote Speaker
Great Room**

Keynote Speaker: Chris M. Richardson practices with the immigration team at Nelson Mullins and is a former U.S. Diplomat for the U.S. Department of State with experience in immigration law, consular affairs, foreign affairs, public diplomacy, and strategic communication. He has served as American Citizen Services Chief, with prior experience as Deputy Consular Section Chief, Immigrant Visa Chief, Acting Nonimmigrant Visa Chief, and Deputy Nonimmigrant Visa Chief, with assignments in Nigeria, Nicaragua, Pakistan, and Spain.

Mr. Richardson was quoted by Justice Stephen Breyer in his dissent in *Trump v. Hawaii* (the Travel Ban case) and has been interviewed by numerous media outlets regarding his departure from the State Department.

FAMILY TRACK

GREAT ROOM 1

9:00am - 10:00am

Recent Changes at USCIS and How They Impact Family-Based Immigration

This panel will look at the 2018 NTA and RFE memos, as well as the “denaturalization task force” announced by USCIS in July 2018. Speakers will discuss what the latest news is from the field and how to best prepare for the fight.

Speakers:

- Sam Radin, Georgia-Alabama Chapter Treasurer, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Jeremy McKinney, AILA National Treasurer, Greensboro, NC
- Eric Adams, Atlanta, GA

10:00am - 11:00am

Victims of Violence Panel

Working with domestic violence victims has always been difficult, but USCIS and the BIA have added to the headache with significant backlogs for U status and how this intersects with removal proceedings. Panelists will discuss how to work around these new barriers in addition to highlighting new problems with I-912 fee waivers. As an alternative to U status, practitioners may wish to add T status to their arsenal of relief.

Speakers:

- Alpa Amin, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Hannah MacNorlin, Georgia-Alabama Citizenship Day Committee Chair, Atlanta, GA
- Jennifer Hamamoto, Atlanta, GA

11:00am - 11:15am Break

11:15am - 12:15

Consular Processing Changes: Public Charge Basis of Inadmissibility

Clients are being denied immigrant visas because of new policy changes at the Department of State. This panel will review those changes and how to best prepare your client for their interview in these times of uncertainty. Speakers will also address what to do when the worst happens, despite your best efforts.

Speakers:

- Eszter Bardi, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Paola Chavarro, Atlanta, GA
- Kerry McGrath, Georgia-Alabama Wellness Committee Chair, Decatur, GA

12:15pm - 12:30pm Break

12:30 - 1:30 Joint Lunch Panel

CIS Ombudsman Panel

A look at the CIS Ombudsman's Office and how we can use it to assist our clients - both individually and on a bigger scale.

- Elissa McGovern, Chief of Policy, Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman's Office, Washington, DC.

1:30pm - 1:45pm Break

1:45pm - 2:45pm

Who Can Adjust?

Figuring out who can apply for adjustment of status isn't always straight-forward. This panel will review some of the ways that practitioners can view "admitted and paroled" in creative ways for TPS and DACA applicants, as well as looking at arriving aliens and INA § 245(i)

Speakers:

- Jennifer Bensman, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Kamala Sessoms, Georgia-Alabama National Day of Action (GA) Chair, Atlanta, GA
- Jorge Gavilanes, Atlanta, GA

2:45pm - 3:45pm

Time to Mandamus?

When is time to sue the government for failure to take on action on a case? This panel will review 28 USC § 1361; 8 USC § 1447(b); 4 USC § 555(b) and 5 USC § 706(1), covering naturalization, long-pending cases, and the Administrative Procedures Act.

Speakers:

- Ava Benach, Washington, DC (DL)
- Helen Parsonage, Winston-Salem, NC

3:45pm - 4:00pm Break

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Immigration Confidential

Former government officials will provide their insight as to the way policies and missions have changed in the new administration, including the way that they were allowed to interact with attorneys. Speakers are appearing in their personal capacity and their thoughts are in no way reflective of their former employer.

Speakers:

- Tracie L. Klinke, Georgia-Alabama Chapter Immediate Past Chair, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Rena Cutlip-Mason, Washington, DC (formerly with EOIR)
- Former USCIS Officer, Atlanta, GA

BUSINESS TRACK

GREAT ROOM 2

9:00am - 10:00am

Business 101 - The ABC's in Under an Hour

This panel is designed to provide an overview of business immigration for new practitioners or for those who practice a different area of immigration law.

- Nonimmigrant Visas
- Immigrant Visas
- Suggestions for Getting Started

Speakers:

- Karen Weinstock, Atlanta, GA
- Dara Berger, Atlanta, GA
- Manjunath Gokare, Alpharetta, GA

Buttoning Up the H-1B - Strategizing for Success with H-1B Petitions

In light of the upcoming cap season, seasoned practitioners share their strategies for success and review ways to “button up” an H-1B to win an approval with the USCIS.

- Talking “job descriptions” with your employer - how can they prepare for success on the front end
- Picking the right occupational classification (or preparing your defense)
- Matching the employee’s background to the job - combination of experience and education when the degree doesn’t match

Speakers:

- Beth McKee, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Justin Russo, Atlanta, GA
- Audra Doyle, Georgia-Alabama Military Assistance Program Chair, Decatur, GA

11:00am - 11:15am Break

11:15am - 12:15pm

DUIs, Assault and other Misdemeanors, Oh My - Delving into Crimmigration for Employment-based Applicants

The revocation of visas within a few days of a DUI arrest is frightening for all involved - the applicant, his/her employer and his/her immigration attorney. A DUI isn't what it used to be, and in that vein, this panel will take a closer look at the impact of an arrest or conviction, how to

prepare clients for nonimmigrant and immigrant visa filings post-arrest/conviction and what you can do from the start to create the "best outcome".

- Visa revocation (it's about public health y'all)
- Criminal charges in general
- Strategies for being success (pre-adjudication of arrest and post-adjudication)

Speakers

- Emily Davis, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Robert Casazza, New York, NY
- Ben Sessions, Atlanta, GA

12:15pm - 12:30pm Break

12:30 - 1:30 Joint Lunch Panel

SEE ABOVE

1:30pm - 1:45pm Break

1:45pm - 2:45pm

Applying at the Border - What Challenges Are We Facing and What May Lie Ahead

The northern border is becoming a more and more challenging place to lodge applications, and the southern border continues to have its own issues. This panel will review strategies for success including recommendations for petition preparation, employee interviews and rethinking the USCIS option when possible.

- TN applications
- L-1's (individual versus blanket)
- USCIS

Speakers:

- Sharon Poorak, Atlanta, GA DL
- Laine Posel, Atlanta, GA
- Ramon Curiel, San Antonio, TX

2:45pm - 3:45pm

PERM: The One Thing Holding (Mainly) Steady

This panel will provide a quick overview of the PERM process and discuss updates.

- Elizabeth Garvish, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Kenneth Levine, Marietta, GA
- Kevin Miner, AILA Board of Governors, Atlanta, GA

3:45pm - 4:00pm Break

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Navigating Ethical Obligations in a Changing Business Environment

Employment-based cases may have dodged the NTA memo for now, but how to business practitioners advise their clients in an ever-changing environment? Panelists will provide an overview of recent changes, best practice for eliminating risks, and how to answer when you don't know the answer.

Ethics CLE credit pending

Speakers:

- Janora Hawkins, Georgia-Alabama Chapter Second Vice Chair, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Lea Alfano, Orlando, FL
- Allen Orr, AILA National Second Vice President, Washington DC

HOW WORKSHOPS

STUDIO 2

9:00am - 10:00am

HOW: Preparing an Asylum Application

This hands on workshop will walk newer practitioners through the I-589 and address common errors applicants make on the form. The Panelists will also talk about the types of documents necessary at the time of filing and how to amend a filing when the interview or court date approaches.

Presenters:

- Amir Naim, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Killa Marti, Atlanta, GA

10:00am - 11:00am

HOW: Strategies for Preparing Clients to Testify in Court

This introductory HOW will walk practitioners through the art of trial prep, including checking for veracity, inconsistencies and how to handle any mistakes that happen in the middle of a hearing.

Presenters:

- Marty Rosenbluth, Lumpkin, GA (DL)
- Pamela Peynado Stewart, Atlanta, GA

11:00am - 11:15am Break

11:15am - 12:15pm

HOW: Master and Bond Hearing

This basic HOW will show practitioners who are newer to court the mechanics of a master and bond hearing. The panelists will also explain how telephonic requests can save you time and gas.

Speakers:

- Michael Urbina, Georgia-Alabama Media and Unauthorized Practice of Law (GA) Chair, Kennesaw, GA
- Joy Smith Rich, Decatur, GA

1:45pm - 2:45pm

HOW: Consular Processing

This introduction to Consular Processing family-based cases will provide an overview of working with the National Visa Center and how to prepare clients for interviews abroad. Participants are encouraged to bring their case specific questions to this panel. Both employment-based and family-based consular processing will be addressed.

Speakers

- Nellie Navidi, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Olesia Gorinshteyn, Atlanta, GA

2:45 - 3:45pm

HOW: I-9 and E-Verify Workshop

A practical look into preparing an I-9 and registering/ensuring compliance with eVerify.

Speakers:

- Eileen Scofield, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Nicole Kersey, St. Petersburg, FL

3:45pm - 4:00pm Break

4:00pm - 5:00pm

HOW: The Art of Responding to an H-1B Audit and Tips for Audit File Maintenance

Learn best practices from responding to file maintenance.

Speakers:

- Sarah Hawk, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Loren Lock, Atlanta, GA

RECEPTION

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Elevate Bar (Inside the W)

Come enjoy a waffle bar, light hors d'Oeuvres, and drinks (two drink tickets will be provided) and catch-up with your fellow Conference Attendees!

FRIDAY, February 15th

7:00am - 5:00pm

Registration and Exhibitors

Great Room Foyer

A light breakfast will be served between 7:00am and 8:00am.

Joint Family/Removal and Business

GREAT ROOM

8:00am - 9:00am

Media 101: How to Message Yourself and Your Clients

Sometimes clients' cases are won outside the courtroom. How do you identify a compelling story and approach a media outlet about it? Does it do more harm than good and how do you explain the advantages of going public to your client? Once you've found an outlet, you'll need to know how to best present your case. This panel will go over "Media 101" in helping you take your advocacy to the next level.

Speakers:

- Megan Hodgkiss, Hodgkiss Consulting, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Jamene Christian, Georgia-Alabama Chapter Media Committee Vice-Chair, Atlanta, GA
- Belinda James, CBS46 News, Atlanta, GA

9:00am - 10:00am

Liaison Updates

This lunch panel will provide our membership with the latest information our local liaisons have from their respective government agencies.

Speakers:

- Zaira Solano, Georgia-Alabama EOIR Committee Chair and National Day of Action (AL) Chair, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Erin Elliott Ustaoglu, Georgia-Alabama USCIS Committee Chair, Atlanta, GA
- Anna Erwin, Georgia-Alabama ICE Committee Chair, Atlanta, GA

10:00am - 10:15am Break

REMOVAL TRACK

GREAT ROOM 1

10:15am - 11:15am

RIP Administrative Closure and the Future of Continuances

Learn all about *Matter of Castro-Tum* from an attorney who was on the front lines. Why this case? What options are practitioners left with now and how do we navigate the I-601A process now? Panelists will also review cases that followed *Castro-Tum*, including *Matter of L-A-B-R*.

Speakers

- Eli Echols, Georgia-Alabama Chapter Chair, Duluth, GA (DL)
- Charles Kuck, AILA National Past President, Atlanta, GA
- Carolina Antonini, Atlanta, GA

11:15am - 12:15pm

Georgia Immigration Courts Deep Dive

What's the inside scoop at the courts in Georgia? How do you handle hearings for clients detained in Folkston? This panel will look at specific judges, their preferences on motions, hearings and evidence and other quirks that you would only know if you were there.

Speakers:

- Elizabeth Matherne, Georgia-Alabama Chapter First Vice Chair, Ocilla, GA (DL)
- Giovanni Diaz, Atlanta, GA
- Noemi Puntier, Norcross, GA

12:15pm - 12:30pm Break

12:30pm - 1:30pm Joint Lunch Panel

Professional Obligations in Dual Representation Situations

What are your obligations in dual-representation? Panelists will look at potential conflicts between employees and employers, VAWA cases, and divorce.

Professionalism CLE requested

Speakers:

- Joanna Delfunt, Georgia-Alabama Pro Bono Committee Chair, Cumming, GA (DL)
- Courtney Noce, Georgia-Alabama CBP Committee Chair, Atlanta, GA
- Patricia McKenzie, Lawrenceville, GA

1:30pm - 1:45pm Break

1:45 - 2:45pm

Asylum Issues

The Attorney General has eviscerated certain types of asylum applications and policies seem to be changing by the day. This panel will provide an overview of the current state of affairs and give insight on how to prepare a “particular social group.”

Speakers

- Sarah Owings, AILA Board of Governors, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Will Miller, Georgia-Alabama Asylum Committee Chair, Atlanta, GA
- Maura Finn, Atlanta, GA

Wellness Mini-Track

2:45pm - 3:45pm

Brave New World in Ethics

When policies change, when processing times become beyond what’s expected, when clients hear something on the news, what do you? How do you advise clients in a day and age where it seems as though nothing is predictable. These panelists will walk you through scenarios and will take questions from the floor.

Ethics CLE credit pending

Speakers:

- Layli Eskandari-Deal, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Rahim Dhanani, Atlanta, GA
- Irene Steffas, Marietta, GA

3:45pm - 4:00pm Break

4:00pm - 5:00pm

JOINT SESSION

Helping Your Firm By Helping Your Staff

Our clients’ stories and the chaos of the current state of affairs takes a toll on us as well as our staff. This panel will look at ways to create and maintain a supportive work environment. The

panel will discuss strategies to identify and address burnout with your staff and ways to empower them while also caring for yourself. Goodies and wellness tidbits.

Speakers:

- Rachel Effron Sharma, Georgia-Alabama Chapter Secretary, Atlanta, GA
- Heidi Guzman, Psychologist, Atlanta, GA
- Gergana "Gerry" Tzekova, Atlanta, GA

5:00pm - 6:00pm

JOINT SESSION

Mindfulness and the Benefits of Meditation

Come learn (and put into practice) some self-care by learning about the benefits of meditation and mindfulness. Our panelists will discuss how we can become less reactive in the face of modern day stress and also lead the group in meditation.

Speakers:

- Marshall Cohen, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Bee Intakanok, Georgia Meditation Circle, Atlanta, GA
- The Venerable, Georgia Mediation Circle, Atlanta, GA

BUSINESS TRACK

GREAT ROOM 2

10:15am - 11:15am

L-1 Strategies for Success (Success You Say?)

L-1 petitions have become notoriously difficult - the new administration's call for scrutiny is having an impact. This panel will review current trends and strategies for success in light of current adjudications.

- New office issues
- Specialized knowledge RFEs
- Manager/Executive RFEs

Speakers:

- Caroline Taylor, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Anton Mertens, Atlanta, GA
- Sarah Buffett, Charlotte, NC

11:15am - 12:15pm

Thinking Globally and/or Taxation Things You Should Know

The focus for most practitioners is immigration to the U.S., but what about globally? How is

immigration becoming easier or more difficult elsewhere and what tax implications should you think about when considering global employees?

- Global Immigration basics (top 8 countries)
- Taxation Tips (things to keep in mind)

Speakers:

- Clayton Cartwright, Columbus, GA (DL)
- Adriana Varela, Atlanta, GA

12:15pm - 12:30pm Break

12:30pm - 1:30pm Joint Lunch Panel

Professional Obligations in Dual Representation Situations

See Above

1:30pm - 1:45pm Break

1:45pm - 2:45pm

Ganging Up to Achieve Success - Working Together for the Common Good

Business practitioners often do not litigate, but with the sharp increase in denials and anticipated lack of immediate relief it may be time to consider how we can “lawyer up” to create important case law.

- Options for remedies – BIA, AAO, and BALCA or Court (state / federal)?
- Mandamus
- Habeas
- Class Action
- Procedures

Speakers:

- Rob Cohen, DL, Columbus, OH
- Dustin Baxter, Atlanta, GA

2:45pm - 3:45pm

Cyber Security and Technology in Solo/Small Practice

This panel will help practitioners learn what types of questions to ask when looking for cybersecurity solutions, various options available. Panelists will also talk about trends and new software/apps to make your practice more efficient.

Speakers:

- Natalie Kelly, State Bar of Georgia, Atlanta, GA
- Bhavya Chaudhary, Norcross, GA
- David Bridges, Atlanta, GA

HOW WORKSHOPS

STUDIO 2

8:00am - 9:00am

Naturalization Workshop

Panelists will walk through how to best prepare a case, walk through examples and take case-specific questions from the audience regarding questionable naturalization scenarios.

Speakers

- Lauren Levin, Atlanta, GA
- Julio Moreno, Atlanta, GA

9:00am - 10:00am

Managing Caseload: Who Does What

Geared toward the boutique and solo practitioner, how are those who have been thriving maximizing office personnel from paralegals to assistants?

Speakers:

- Nisha Karnani, Atlanta, GA
- Amy Myers, Georgia-Alabama Advocacy (AL) Chair, Birmingham, AL

10:00am - 10:15am Break

10:15am - 11:15am

The Art of Preparing an Affidavit of Support

Seems straightforward, but the affidavit of support can be trickier than you anticipated. Learn how to prepare it properly and the things to be aware of.

Speakers:

- Sonal Shah, Atlanta, GA (DL)
- Leslie Diaz, Atlanta, GA

11:15am - 12:15

Putting Together I-601s and I-601A Waivers

This session will look at both traditional and creative ways of showing extreme hardship in waiver cases.

Speakers:

- Carrie Toth (DL), Atlanta, GA
- Edivette Lopez-Benn, Marietta, GA

Practice Management Mini-Track

STUDIO 2

1:45pm - 2:45pm

AILA Membership Benefits

Come learn about all the ways that AILA can help you as a practitioner and as a person.

Speaker:

- Paul Leahy, Associate Director of Membership and Component Relations, AILA National, Washington, DC (DL)
- Olga Gambini, Georgia-Alabama New Member Division Chair, Atlanta, GA

3:45pm - 4:00pm Break

Getting Paid

This panel of experts will talk about how to set-up payment schemes that work. They will also talk about flat fee versus hourly rates.

Speakers:

- Rebecca Rojas, (DL) Atlanta, GA
- Dale Schwartz, AILA Board of Governors and Past President, Atlanta, GA

2019 Chapter Conference Planning Committee

Janora Hawkins, Co-Chair

Tracie L. Klinke, Co-Chair

Eszter Bardi

Aimee Clark

Monica Modi Khant

Kamala Sessoms

Carolyn "Carrie" Toth

Denotes Speaker Invited, Not Yet Confirmed

