



January 7, 2025 Newsletter

Dear Chapter Members:

Happy New Year Thank you for an INCREDIBLE Holiday Party at the Ponce City Market Rooftop! We celebrated the new year in style against the twinkling Atlanta skyline and donated to power the work of eight nonprofit organizations serving the immigrant community.

We are thrilled to announce that Ira Kurzban will be our Keynote Speaker for the AILA GA-AL Annual Conference! SIGN UP TODAY to attend AILA GA-AL's Annual Conference on February 28 and March 1. Early bird rates end January 31! <https://ga-al.com/aila-2025-conference/>.

Give back to the community through pro bono service by volunteering at our upcoming Citizenship Day (shout out to the Outreach Committee and Tara Nalepa!) on **Saturday, February 1** from 11am to 4pm in Buckhead. Support aspiring citizens as they build a bright future here in Georgia. **Sign up here!** <https://forms.gle/JbXRrvRDH6MkQDN7A>

Our next all-chapter Zoom "Water Cooler" conversation is coming up on February 7 at 12pm! We are hosting these each month as a safe space for casual conversation and giving/receiving support with your AILA colleagues. If you'd like to help facilitate this or future Water Cooler conversations, please reach out to Excomm!

As a reminder, per the results of our communication poll, we will be exploring the supplemental use of Groups.io (in addition to keeping the email listserv as is) to produce more streamlined conversations. More information to come shortly about Groups.io!

If you have news, events, job postings, or resumes you'd like us to share in future newsletters, please reach out to me and I will add them to the newsletter!

Sincerely,

Adriana

News:

1. PRO BONO OPPORTUNITY - AILA CITIZENSHIP DAY - February 1, 2025 - Buckhead YMCA

- Date: Saturday, Feb 1 from 11am to 4pm
- Location: Carl E. Sanders Family YMCA, 1160 Moores Mill Rd NW, Atlanta, GA 30327
- Join us in making a difference! Volunteering for AILA Citizenship Day 2025 is a powerful way to support aspiring citizens in our community as they build a bright future here in Georgia. No prior immigration or naturalization experience is required; volunteers will receive training regarding the naturalization application (called Form N-400) and fee waiver application. If you have any questions, please email Tara Nalepa at tnalepa@immigrationlawgroup.com
- Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/JbXRrvRDH6MkQDN7A>

2. EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION ENDING THIS MONTH - February 28 - March 1, 2025 - AILA GA-AL Chapter Conference:

- We are thrilled to announce that Ira Kurzban will be our Keynote Speaker. Early bird registration ends January 31!
- You are cordially invited to join the GA-AL American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) chapter's annual immigration law conference scheduled for **Friday, February 28 - Saturday, March 1, 2025** at the **Emory Conference Center in Atlanta, GA**. National, regional, and local presenters will speak across five tracks and attendees can earn up to 12 CLE credits (including ethics, professionalism, and technology). Please see the attached "Day-at-a-Glance" for details on this year's lineup of panels.

To join this event at the early bird rate of \$329, please click [REGISTER HERE](#). Please note that [hotel reservations](#) at the Emory Conference Center Hotel are available at our group rate of \$199/night.

3. Starfish Story - Read this month's and submit a story for next month's newsletter!

- Have you or one of your colleagues achieved a win against all odds / after a grueling battle? Share it to inspire your colleagues and get our collective gears turning by emailing me at secretary@ga-al.com!
- **Thank you to Danielle Claffey for agreeing to let me steal her amazing story of a hard-fought triumph for this month's Story**—read her account below:

- *Great outcome on a federal litigation case...*

My client is an Indian national and the principal beneficiary of an EB AOS that was denied in 2018. After several MTRs by prior attorneys, he came to us to litigate. I first filed a mandamus on the 290b, and the AOS denial was affirmed. So, I basically begged general counsel of his former employer (large state

agency) to provide us with an official letter clearing our client of prior alleged fraud that was the basis of the denial. Mind you, the denial also led to the AOS denials for his wife and two adult children. None of them had any options to stay in the US, but for getting the AOS' reopened. We refiled a new complaint challenging the actual fraud claim, and USCIS reopened without filing a motion to dismiss in court despite the Supreme Court decision in Patel v. U.S. Attorney General. They just approved the principal's AOS... [The family's green cards arrived just after the New Year!!!]

When you know USCIS issued an unjust decision, don't give up until you get the outcome that is deserved... federal court is still an excellent tool to hold USCIS accountable!

3. Action: Take a poll for the Education Subcommittee!

- The Internal Member Support committee of the AILA GA/AL chapter is planning a slate of brown bag meetings/round table discussions as well as a slate of CLE. Due to the fact that our membership spans two states, all of these events will be conducted virtually to maximize the ability of our membership to attend regardless of geographical location. To facilitate planning, [please take this poll](#).

4. Action: Send a submission for DEI member spotlight!

- The wealth of legal knowledge shared at the AILA Georgia/Alabama Chapter derives from the diverse cultural and personal qualities and experiences of its membership body. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee of this Chapter aims to embrace and celebrate the diverse heritages of our members by providing a platform to honor these rich member experiences in the Chapter Newsletter's DEI Member Spotlight. We are currently seeking submissions from our Chapter for feature in the Newsletter's Member Spotlight. The Member Spotlight is an opportunity for our members to share with the rest of our membership their stories and values which support and influence their legal practice.
 - If you have a story you'd like to share, please email Zainab Alwan (zainab@socheatchea.com) and Cassandra DeCoste (cdecoste@firclaw.org)

4. Seeking employment opportunities

- Mahin Rai is seeking an immigration legal assistant position. Please check out her resume in the attachments to the newsletter!

6. Looking for work or hiring? Send us your job description/resume!

If you are looking for a new role or hiring, please email us so that we can help amplify your role/candidacy!

CHART OF IMPORTANT LINKS & RESOURCES

AILA Georgia Alabama Chapter Website	https://ga-al.com/
AILA GA-AL Chapter Listserv and Official AILA email list	<p>Listserv: georgia-alabama@lists.aila.org</p> <p>Click on https://www.aila.org/myaila and keep your email address updated. Also click here: https://www.aila.org/MyAila/Account/Listservs) where it says “Review and Change AILA Listserv Subscriptions” to make sure you are subscribed to the “Georgia-Alabama Chapter” chapter’s official listserv.</p>
SLACK (Formally “Yahoo Listserv”)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create an account with Slack or log in to your existing account and link our chapter Workspace through a link. Since links expire after 7 days, please email Chapter Vice Chair <first.vice.chair@ga-al.com> in order to receive an updated link. 2. Once you log in, you can begin adding the channels that you wish to follow and participate in. We recommend everyone join the general channel to start. 3. Links to resources available through Slack to help learn the basics are the following: Slack Guides, Slack 101 and

	a video training.
American Immigration Council	https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org
AILA Immigrant Justice Campaign & AILA Fearless Lawyering	https://www.aila.org/about/immigration-justice-campaign

AILA's Immigration Practice & Professionalism Toolbox	https://agora.aila.org/product/detail/3531
AILA Member Benefit Guide	https://www.aila.org/membership/benefits/membership-benefits-guide

Connect with Your Chapter

Your 2024-2025 Executive Committee:

Chapter Chair: Hiba Ghalib

1st Vice Chair: Bhavya Chaudhary

2nd Vice Chair: Eszter Bardi

Treasurer: Sonal Shah

Secretary: Adriana Heffley

Immediate Past Chair: Erin Elliott

Please email content suggestions for future newsletters to:

Chapter Secretary: secretary@ga-ai.com

Your feedback means EVERYTHING to us. Please feel free to provide feedback about the newsletter, chapter events, and anything and everything else you wish to provide feedback on as it related to chapter matters:

<https://forms.gle/ybEPs5vFADnF4bFVA>



Adriana Heffley
Secretary

Georgia Alabama Chapter