

**U.S. Embassy in Singapore**

*Consular Section*

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**American Citizen Services (ACS) Newsletter**

***August-September 2010***

The newsletter is our way of sharing topics of general interest as well as any changes in Embassy hours or procedures. We will continue to send time-sensitive announcements separately. If you need to update your registration (now called Safe Traveler Enrollment Program or STEP), please click [here](#). Please share your feedback with us at [SingaporeACS@state.gov](mailto:SingaporeACS@state.gov). *Thank you!*

If you no longer live in or travel to Singapore, please send us an email with your full name and your request for removal to [SingaporeACS@state.gov](mailto:SingaporeACS@state.gov).

The U.S. Embassy is now on **Facebook**. Please click [here](#) and become a "fan" today.

**Topics covered in this Issue:**

Upcoming Holiday and Administrative Closures

Updated Travel Information

Must I register to vote?

Were you born in Puerto Rico? What you need to know . . .

Passport, Notarial, and other Consular Fees Increased as of July 13, 2010

Travel Registration with the State Department now rebranded as the "Safe Traveler Enrollment Program"

Does your Tax Preparer have the New Required IRS Credentials?

Topic of Interest: Want to avoid those long Customs lines in the U.S.?

### **Upcoming ACS Closures**

The Consular section will be closed on the following dates in August and September 2010. For an emergency during these holidays involving an American citizen, please contact the Duty Officer at 6476-9100.

<b>August 9, 2010 (Monday)</b>	<b>Singapore Holiday National Day</b>
<b>August 26, 2010 (Thursday)</b>	<b>Consular Administrative Day*</b>
<b>September 6, 2010 (Monday)</b>	<b>U.S. Holiday Labor Day</b>
<b>September 10, 2010 (Friday)</b>	<b>Singapore Holiday Hari Raya Puasa</b>
<b>September 23, 2010 (Thursday)</b>	<b>Consular Administrative Day*</b>

**Every Thursday afternoon** from 12noon onward we are routinely closed to the public for training and administrative purposes except for collection of passports between 3:00-3:30.

**Holidays:** The Embassy observes certain local and American holidays. On these days, the Consular Section will be closed. For an emergency involving an American citizen, please contact the Duty Officer at 6476-9100 at any time.

\* We will be closed for all routine American Citizen Services such as passport renewal, extra passport pages and notarial services on these days. We will be open for collection of documents only at 3:00 – 3:30pm. Regular services will resume the following working day.

### **Current Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts:**

**Travel Warnings** are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. Below please find a link to a Travel Warning for a country of regional interest. For a complete listing of Travel Warnings for all regions, please visit:

<http://travel.state.gov>.

[Nepal](#) June 15, 2010

[Pakistan](#) July 22, 2010

**Travel Alerts** are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, generally within a particular country, that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Below please find a link to a Travel Alert for a country of regional interest. For a complete listing of Travel Alerts for all regions, please visit: <http://travel.state.gov>.

[Pacific typhoon season](#) June 16, 2010

### **Current Warden Messages of regional interest:**

**Warden Messages** are notices sent directly to American citizens to provide important information about local conditions.

[Increase in crime involving rickshaws in Baridhara and Galshan, Bangladesh](#) June 13, 2010

[Typhoon season in the Philippines](#) July 14, 2010

[Political protests and violent demonstrations in Male, Maldives](#) July 16, 2010

[Emergency decree powers lifted in additional provinces of Thailand](#) July 23, 2010

### **Updated Country Specific Information for countries in our region:**

The Department of State maintains at all times Country Specific Information for every country in the world. This information is updated approximately twice a year or as necessary due to changing conditions. Recently, updates have been posted for the following countries in the region.

[Bahrain](#) June 23, 2010

[Laos](#) June 18, 2010

[Malaysia](#) June 16, 2010

[Nepal](#) June 22, 2010

[Sri Lanka](#) July 1, 2010

**Must I register to vote? YES**

With at least **35 seats in the Senate** up for grabs, **435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives** coming open, and **38 governorships** waiting to be filled, every American should consider it their duty to vote. Let your voice be heard. Because of new changes in voting practices, every person wanting to vote this year in the November General Elections who is not already registered **must register to vote**. In many states absentee ballots are available on line. The states are now required to offer an option to send out ballots electronically. Depending on what each state decides, voters will be able to get their ballot by email or fax, or go to a state website where they can download a blank absentee ballot. You must register to vote by completing a FPCA form on which you include your email address and indicate how you want your blank voting ballot delivered (mail/fax/email). Find your voter registration form and state voter registration information at <http://www.fvap.gov/>.

### **Were you born in Puerto Rico? What you need to know . . .**

A new birth certificate law prohibits the widespread practice of retaining certified copies of Puerto Rican birth certificates. Effective September 30, 2010, all certified copies of Puerto Rican birth certificates issued prior to July 1, 2010, will be invalid. The government of Puerto Rico has launched an online application process (at [www.pr.gov](http://www.pr.gov)) for the new, secure birth certificates. Individuals seeking a new certificate will be able to complete a bilingual application, upload necessary supporting documents, and pay for the new birth certificate online. Puerto Rico began issuing the new, secure birth certificates on July 1.

### **Consular Fees Increase**

New Consular fees became effective worldwide starting on Tuesday, July 13, 2010. Below are the **new rates for some common services**:

**Visa Pages** added to your passport are **no longer free** and now cost US\$82.

**Adult passport renewal fee** is now US\$110.

**Minor passport fee** (newborns and persons under the age of 16) is now US\$105.

**Consular Report of Birth Abroad** document fee is now US\$100.

**Notarial services** now require a US\$50 charge per notary signature.

Consular fees cover actual operating expenses for the 301 overseas consular posts, 23 domestic passport agencies and other centers that provide these consular services to U.S. and foreign citizens.

### **Travel Registration with the State Department now rebranded as the “Safe Traveler Enrollment Program” (STEP)**

The Department of State has selected the name "Safe Traveler Enrollment Program" to replace "Internet Based Registration Service" (IBRS) which refers to "Registration with Embassies." If you are already registered you do not need to re-register.

### **Does your tax preparer have the new required IRS credentials?**

The IRS kicked off the 2010 tax filing season by issuing a [report](#) proposing new registration, testing, and continuing education of paid tax return preparers. With more than 80 percent of American households using a tax preparer or tax software, higher standards for the tax preparer community will significantly enhance protections and service for taxpayers, increase confidence in the tax system, and result in greater compliance with tax laws over the long term. To learn more about the IRS requirements for tax preparers that will take effect on January 1, 2011, and to know what credentials to ask to see before you secure a tax preparer next season, please click [here](#).

### **Topic of Interest: Want to avoid those long immigration lines in the U.S.?**

Global Entry is a service put in place by the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Agency. You can find these Global Entry kiosks in 20 major airports across the United States. Check out their website at [www.globalentry.gov](http://www.globalentry.gov). Another advantage to having Global Entry is the opportunity to use special "APEC" or crew lines for other APEC economies. So, bypass those long immigration lines in the U.S. and other APEC countries and pursue being a Global Entry applicant. This Global Entry service is only available to American citizens. The fee is US\$100, requires a stateside appointment, fingerprinting, and persons age 14 and up are eligible to apply. Approved candidates are eligible to use this service for 5 years.