



Email Correspondence Between the American Physical Society (APS) & the then-Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services of the US Department of State

>>> "Edson, Tony A" <*****@state.gov> 10/25/2006 11:08 AM >>>

Amy:

Thank you for the opportunity to set the record straight on this issue. Of course a passport must be submitted at the time of visa application, and we will in many cases retain the passport for the duration of processing just so that when any required clearances are completed we are prepared to immediately visa and return the passport to the applicant. This is not necessary, however, and travelers should feel free to ask for their passports back if their case is deferred for additional processing. The only, relatively minor inconvenience, will be the for applicants to return their passports to the consular section once they are cleared so that the visa can be issued. No traveler should ever have to defer or miss travel because we are holding their passport for visa issuance. Please ask your members to just ask.

Stephen A. "Tony" Edson
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Visa Services
Bureau of Consular Affairs
US Department of State

-----Original Message-----

From: Amy Flatten [mailto:flatten@aps.org]

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 5:53 PM

To: *****@state.gov

Cc: irwin@aps.org; Rhonda M Clegg

Subject: Visa Application Policy

October 24, 2006

Dr. Amy K. Flatten
Director of International Affairs
The American Physical Society
One Physics Ellipse
College Park, Maryland 20740-3844

Mr. Stephen A. Edson
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Edson,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you last week. As I mentioned during our meeting, many members of the international physics community would appreciate clarification regarding the need to leave one's passport with the Consular Officer when applying for a visa to travel to the United States.

As Director of International Affairs for the American Physical Society, an organization representing over 45,000 physicists worldwide, I am hearing of many instances where physicists are unable to travel for long periods, since their passport is retained at the U.S. Consular Office while their visa application is processed.

As physics is an international endeavor, physicists must travel extensively to attend conferences and participate in ongoing collaborations with colleagues across the globe. Any extended period without a passport will create a professional hardship for most physicists. Consequently, your insights and guidance regarding this concern would be most appreciated.

Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Amy K. Flatten