



NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 21, 2021

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County Clerk Hanlon Pens Letter to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken Urging Immediate Action to Address the Massive and Unprecedented Passport Processing Delays

FREEHOLD, NJ – Monmouth County Clerk Christine Giordano Hanlon is urging U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and the U.S. State Department to make the easing of passport renewal and issuance delays a top priority. Federal passport delays have reached crisis proportions and the State Department must act now to address the unprecedented delays. Clerk Hanlon has penned a letter to Secretary Blinken, and has shared this letter with New Jersey's U.S. Senators and Monmouth County's Congressional Representatives.

According to the U.S. State Department, the current published processing time for routine passport issuance is almost 5 months. The State Department website also states that travelers should actually plan for passport turnaround time of 6 months. For expedited service, the processing time is 12 weeks.

“As a passport agency, my office assists residents of Monmouth County with passport applications, that we, in turn, forward to the U.S. State Department for passport issuance or renewal,” said Clerk Hanlon. “Due to the current situation involving unprecedented passport issuance delays, we have received countless phone calls and messages from frantic residents who are scheduled to leave the country to travel abroad and who have not received their passports in time. Because the time frame has lengthened several times, applicants have not had enough time or notice to adjust to the extended time.”

“Americans are ready to travel and get their lives back to normal,” said Clerk Hanlon. “My staff and I hear the concerns of frustrated residents who are missing important work trips, vacations, and family events due to the U.S. State Department’s unprecedented processing delays,” continued Clerk Hanlon. “In addition, they have indicated that they are unable to reach anyone by phone or email for answers. Unfortunately, we have no way to help them, except to refer them to a member of Congress for some type of assistance.”

Clerk Hanlon is urging that the State Department consider a variety of creative ways to ease the backlog, including the hiring and training of full time and temporary staff, moving employees from other areas of the State Department to assist with phone calls and emails, as well as setting up a call center. Clerk Hanlon also requested that the State Department consider an extension of the expiration date for all U.S. passports that have recently expired or are scheduled to expire within the next 6 months.

“The delays have reached crisis proportions and I am hoping that working together, the various divisions of the federal government can address this difficult situation,” said Clerk Hanlon. “While all levels of government have faced obstacles in providing their government services during the pandemic, it is now critical to find ways to

address the current passports delays and to ensure that the current wait times can be mitigated. Addressing this issue should be made a top priority.”

For more information about the current federal passport processing times, please visit the U.S. State Department, Bureau of Consular Affairs website at travel.state.gov.

For more information about the passport application process and the Monmouth County Clerk’s Office passport office locations, please visit the Monmouth County Clerk’s website at MonmouthCountyClerk.com.

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