

# THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK COUNTY OF MONMOUTH

CHRISTINE GIORDANO HANLON  
MONMOUTH COUNTY CLERK



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July 21, 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Ian G. Brownlee  
Acting Assistant Secretary of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs  
U.S. Department of State  
600 19th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Secretary Blinken and Acting Assistant Secretary Brownlee:

Thank you for your service to our great nation. I am the County Clerk for the County of Monmouth and I am writing to you today to ask your assistance in addressing the massive and unprecedented processing delays that are currently occurring in the U.S. State Department.

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.

As I am sure you already know, 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 6 months. For expedited service, the processing time is 12 weeks. Because the time frame has lengthened several times, applicants have not had enough time or notice to adjust to the extended time.

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.

Americans are ready to travel and get their lives back to normal. 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. 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.

I am confident that your offices have also received countless similar calls from citizens and that you have worked hard to address their concerns. At this time, however, it is important to look to creative ways to address the crisis. For instance, please consider 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. In addition, please 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. 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.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine Giordano Hanlon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christine Giordano Hanlon, Esq.  
Monmouth County Clerk

CGH:jlc

CC: The Honorable Frank Pallone  
The Honorable Chris Smith  
The Honorable Cory A. Booker  
The Honorable Robert Menendez