

# Immigration lawyers tackle issues of changing world

**SLC conference: They say immigration laws often struggle to keep up with modern relationships**

By PAMELA MANSON  
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To see how the world has changed, take a look at the American Immigration Lawyers Association conference being held in Salt Lake City this week.

In addition to traditional topics of deportation law and work visas, the 3,000-plus attorneys attending the annual AILA event at the Salt Palace were offered sessions on post-Sept. 11 changes in the law and options for same-sex partners who want to immigrate.

At one Friday seminar, three legal experts talked about how new types of relationships have changed immigration law.

They pointed out that Canada now makes provisions for common-law couples and non-cohabitating conjugal relationships. The Internet has hooked up international couples who previously would never have had a chance to meet. And the question of how to determine gender of a spouse — by chromosomes, by what an altered birth certificate says after a sex-change operation or by what an individual calls himself or herself — comes up occasionally.

The law hasn't always kept pace with societal changes. Leslie Holman, a Burlington, Vt. attorney said employees of an international company can have

problems bringing a same-sex partner with them when they are assigned to the U.S. office.

"You can bring in a servant, but not your partner" as easily, Holman said.

Definitions of marriage, either state-sanctioned or common law, also are changing. Nan Berzowski, who is both a licensed lawyer in New York and a barrister in Canada, grappled with a case involving a lesbian and a heterosexual man who are life partners and are raising their two children together.

And Noemi Masliah, a New

York City attorney, said some states require that a marriage be consummated to be considered legitimate and not a fraud designed to gain citizenship, while other states do not.

Also on Friday, in conjunction with the AILA conference, the Salt Lake City office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services held a ceremony to naturalize 200 new citizens, who were originally from 53 countries. Some of the new Americans already are serving in the military.

[pmanson@sltrib.com](mailto:pmanson@sltrib.com)