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MAR 10 2008

FILE: [Redacted] Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date:
EAC 04 170 51896

IN RE: Petitioner: [Redacted]
Beneficiary: [Redacted]

PETITION: Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and
Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER: SELF-REPRESENTED

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to
the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The nonimmigrant visa petition was denied by the Acting Director, Vermont Service Center, and is now on appeal before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a naturalized citizen of the United States who seeks to classify the beneficiary, a native and citizen of Vietnam, as the fiancé of a United States citizen pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K).

The acting director denied the petition after determining that the petitioner had not offered documentation evidencing that she and the beneficiary had personally met within two years before the date of filing the petition, as required by section 214(d) of the Act, and that the petitioner had not established that compliance with the meeting requirement would result in extreme hardship to the petitioner. *Decision of the Acting Director*, dated April 14, 2004.

Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K), provides nonimmigrant classification to an alien who:

- (i) is the fiancé(e) of a U.S. citizen and who seeks to enter the United States solely to conclude a valid marriage with that citizen within 90 days after admission;
- (ii) has concluded a valid marriage with a citizen of the United States who is the petitioner, is the beneficiary of a petition to accord a status under section 201(b)(2)(A)(i) that was filed under section 204 by the petitioner, and seeks to enter the United States to await the approval of such petition and the availability to the alien of an immigrant visa; or
- (iii) is the minor child of an alien described in clause (i) or (ii) and is accompanying, or following to join, the alien.

Section 214(d) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d), states, in pertinent part, that a fiancé(e) petition:

. . . shall be approved only after satisfactory evidence is submitted by the petitioner to establish that the parties have previously met in person within two years before the date of filing the petition, have a bona fide intention to marry, and are legally able and actually willing to conclude a valid marriage in the United States within a period of ninety days after the alien's arrival. . . .

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the petitioner may be exempted from this requirement for a meeting if it is established that compliance would:

- (1) result in extreme hardship to the petitioner; or
- (2) that compliance would violate strict and long-established customs of the beneficiary's foreign culture or social practice, as where marriages are traditionally arranged by the parents of the contracting parties and the prospective bride and groom are prohibited from meeting subsequent to the arrangement and prior to the wedding day. In addition to establishing that the required meeting would be a violation of custom or practice, the petitioner must also establish that any and all other aspects of the traditional arrangements have been or will be met in accordance with the custom or practice.

The regulation at section 214.2 does not define what may constitute extreme hardship to the petitioner. Therefore, each claim of extreme hardship must be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account the totality of the petitioner's circumstances. Generally, a director looks at whether the petitioner can demonstrate the existence of circumstances that are (1) not within the power of the petitioner to control or change, and (2) likely to last for a considerable duration or the duration cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

The petitioner filed the Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) (Form I-129F) with Citizenship and Immigration Services on June 19, 2003. Therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met during the period that began on June 19, 2001 and ended on June 19, 2003.

In response to the director's request for evidence and additional information, the petitioner submitted a statement indicating that she met the beneficiary in 2000 and that she traveled to Vietnam to meet him again in October 2003.

On appeal, the petitioner submits a letter stating that in addition to financial hardship, training and licensing requirements for her profession, the petitioner was prevented from filing a Form I-129F petition on behalf of the beneficiary during the required two-year period by a lack of credit history. She indicates that the establishment of credit history is required in order for her to act as a sponsor for the beneficiary. The petitioner further contends that her previous agent failed to perform his duty resulting in the petition being filed later than intended. She indicates that she has made two trips to Vietnam since October 2003. *Letter from Dany Tang*, dated May 12, 2004. In support of these assertions, the petitioner submits a copy of her United States passport identification page; copies of boarding passes issued to the petitioner; a copy of a passenger receipt issued to the petitioner, dated October 2, 2003 and photographs of the petitioner and the beneficiary together, hand-dated May 2004.

The record seeks to establish that the petitioner and the beneficiary met during October 2003 and May 2004 and were together in Vietnam during 2000. Under section 214(d) of the Act, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met between June 19, 2001 and June 19, 2003. The evidence of record does not establish that the petitioner and the beneficiary met as required. Taking into account the totality of the circumstances as the petitioner has presented them, the AAO does not find that compliance with the meeting requirement would result in extreme hardship to the petitioner or would violate strict and long-established customs of the beneficiary's foreign culture or social practice. Therefore, the appeal will be dismissed.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the denial of the petition is without prejudice. The petitioner may file a new Form I-129F petition on the beneficiary's behalf when sufficient evidence is available.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. *See* Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not met that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.