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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
20 Mass. Ave., N.W., Rm. A3042
Washington, DC 20529



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

PUBLIC COPY

10/21/04

[REDACTED]

FILE:

[REDACTED]

Office: Vermont Service Center

Date: **OCT 21 2004**

IN RE:

Applicant:

[REDACTED]

APPLICATION:

Application for Temporary Protected Status under Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1254

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert P. Wiemann".

for Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

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

The applicant is a native and citizen of El Salvador who is seeking Temporary Protected Status (TPS) under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1254.

The director denied the application because the applicant failed to establish she was eligible for late registration. The director also found that the applicant had failed to establish her qualifying residence and physical presence in the United States during the requisite periods.

On appeal, the applicant submits documentation in support of her claim of eligibility for TPS.

Section 244(c) of the Act, and the related regulations in 8 C.F.R. § 244.2, provide that an applicant is eligible for TPS only if such alien establishes that he or she:

- (a) is a national, as defined in section 101(a)(21) of the Act, of a foreign state designated under section 244(b) of the Act;
- (b) has been continuously physically present in the United States since the effective date of the most recent designation of that foreign state;
- (c) has continuously resided in the United States since such date as the Attorney General may designate;
- (d) is admissible as an immigrant under § 244.3;
- (e) is not ineligible under § 244.4; and
- (f)
 - (1) registers for Temporary Protected Status during the initial registration period announced by public notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER, or
 - (2) during any subsequent extension of such designation if at the time of the initial registration period:
 - (i) the applicant is a nonimmigrant or has been granted voluntary departure status or any relief from removal;
 - (ii) the applicant has an application for change of status, adjustment of status, asylum, voluntary departure, or any relief from removal which is pending or subject to further review or appeal;

(iii) the applicant is a parolee or has a pending request for reparole; or

(iv) the applicant is a spouse or child of an alien currently eligible to be a TPS registrant.

- (g) Has filed an application for late registration with the appropriate Service director, within a 60-day period immediately following the expiration or termination of conditions described in paragraph (f)(2) of this section.

The phrase *continuously physically present*, as defined in 8 C.F.R. § 244.1, means actual physical presence in the United States for the entire period specified in the regulations. An alien shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous physical presence in the United States by virtue of brief, casual, and innocent absences as defined within this section.

The phrase *continuously resided*, as defined in 8 C.F.R. § 244.1, means residing in the United States for the entire period specified in the regulations. An alien shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous residence in the United States by reason of a brief, casual and innocent absence as defined within this section or due merely to a brief temporary trip abroad required by emergency or extenuating circumstances outside the control of the alien.

The phrase *brief, casual, and innocent absence*, as defined in 8 C.F.R. § 244.1, means a departure from the United States that satisfies the following criteria:

- (1) Each such absence was of short duration and reasonably calculated to accomplish the purpose(s) for the absence;
- (2) The absence was not the result of an order of deportation, an order of voluntary departure, or an administrative grant of voluntary departure without the institution of deportation proceedings; and
- (3) The purposes for the absence from the United States or actions while outside of the United States were not contrary to law.

Persons applying for TPS offered to El Salvadorans must demonstrate continuous residence in the United States since February 13, 2001, and continuous physical presence in the United States since March 9, 2001. A subsequent extension of the TPS designation has been granted by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, with validity until March 9, 2005, upon the applicant's re-registration during the requisite time period. The record reveals that the applicant filed her application with the Immigration and Naturalization Service, now Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), on September 26, 2002.

The burden of proof is upon the applicant to establish that he or she meets the above requirements. Applicants shall submit all documentation as required in the instructions or requested by CIS. 8 C.F.R. § 244.9(a). The

sufficiency of all evidence will be judged according to its relevancy, consistency, credibility, and probative value. To meet his or her burden of proof the applicant must provide supporting documentary evidence of eligibility apart from his or her own statements. 8 C.F.R. § 244.9(b).

The first issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant is eligible for late registration.

The record of proceedings confirms that the applicant filed her application after the initial registration period had closed. To qualify for late registration, the applicant must provide evidence that during the initial registration period, she was either in a valid immigration status, had an application pending for relief from removal, was a parolee, or was the spouse or child of an alien currently eligible to be a TPS registrant, and she had filed an application for late registration within 60 days of the expiration or termination of the conditions described in 8 C.F.R. § 244.2(f)(2).

On March 20, 2003, the applicant was requested to submit evidence establishing her eligibility for late registration as set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 244.2(f)(2). The applicant was also requested to submit evidence establishing her qualifying residence and physical presence in the United States. The applicant, in response, provided documentation relating to her residence and physical presence in the United States.

The director determined that the applicant had failed to establish she was eligible for late registration and denied the application on May 8, 2003. On appeal, the applicant submits some evidence in an attempt to establish her qualifying residence and physical presence in the United States. However, this evidence does not mitigate the applicant's failure to file her Application for Temporary Protected Status within the initial registration period. The applicant has not submitted any evidence to establish that she has met any of the criteria for late registration described in 8 C.F.R. § 244.2(f)(2). Consequently, the director's conclusion that the applicant had failed to establish her eligibility for late registration will be affirmed.

The second issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant has established her continuous residence in the United States since February 13, 2001, or her continuous physical presence in the United States since March 9, 2001, to the date of filing her application.

As stated above, the applicant was requested on March 20, 2003 to submit evidence establishing her qualifying residence and physical presence in the United States. The applicant, in response, provided a copy of a utility bill reflecting a payment due date of January 28, 2001.

The director determined that the applicant had failed to submit sufficient evidence to establish her eligibility for TPS and denied the application on May 8, 2003. On appeal, the applicant submits a letter dated June 1, 2003, from [REDACTED] Pastor of the Church of God Kingston, Inc., in Kingston, New York, who stated that he has known the applicant since January 2001 and believes she has been in the United States for the past few years; and a copy of a billing statement dated August 14, 2002, from the Ulster Family Medicine, LLP, in Kingston, New York.

The affidavit from [REDACTED] has little evidentiary weight or probative value as it does not provide basic information that is expressly required by 8 C.F.R. § 244.9(a)(2)(v). Specifically, the pastor does not explain the

origin of the information to which he attests, nor does he provide the address where the applicant resided during the period of her involvement with the church.

The photocopied utility bill and billing statements appear to have been altered as the original name and address on the documents seem to have been covered-over and the applicant's name and address have been inserted in its place. It also appears that the original dates on these documents have been altered as well. Doubt cast on any aspect of the applicant's proof may lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the remaining evidence offered in support of the application. It is incumbent upon the applicant to resolve any inconsistencies in the record by independent objective evidence, and attempts to explain or reconcile such inconsistencies, absent competent objective evidence pointing to where the truth lies, will not suffice. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I&N Dec. 582 (BIA 1988).

The applicant has not submitted sufficient credible evidence to establish her qualifying residence in the United States since February 13, 2001, or her physical presence in the United States since March 9, 2001, to the date of filing her application. She has, therefore, failed to establish that she has met the criteria described in 8 C.F.R. § 244.2(b) and (c). Consequently, the director's decision to deny the application for TPS on these grounds will also be affirmed.

An alien applying for TPS has the burden of proving that he or she meets the requirements enumerated above and is otherwise eligible under the provisions of section 244 of the Act. The applicant has failed to meet this burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.