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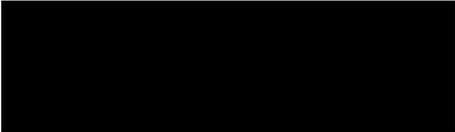
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
20 Mass. Ave., N.W., Rm. A3042
Washington, DC 20529

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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

MI



FILE: [REDACTED] Office: Vermont Service Center
[EAC 02 099 54075]

Date: AUG 09 2005

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.


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 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 her continuous residence in the United States since February 13, 2001, and her continuous physical presence in the United States since March 9, 2001, to the date of filing her application.

On appeal, the applicant submits additional evidence 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 except as provided 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.

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. On July 9, 2002, the Attorney General announced an extension of the TPS designation until September 9, 2003. A subsequent extension of the TPS designation has been granted by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, with validity until September 9, 2006, upon the applicant's re-registration during the requisite time period.

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 Citizenship and Immigration Services (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).

On August 22, 2002, the applicant was requested to submit evidence to establish her continuous residence in the United States as of February 13, 2001, and her continuous physical presence in the United States from March 9, 2001, to the date of filing her application. On May 12, 2003, the director denied the application due to abandonment because the applicant failed to respond to the director's August 22, 2002 request.

The applicant filed a motion to reopen on July 21, 2003, and claimed that she had submitted the requested documentation. The director granted the motion to reopen and rendered a decision on the merits of the case. After a complete review of the record of proceedings, the director determined that the applicant had failed to establish her eligibility for TPS. The director, therefore, denied the application on March 1, 2004.

On March 29, 2004, the applicant filed an appeal to the director's March 1, 2004 decision, which is now before the AAO.

On appeal, the applicant provides the following documentation in support of her eligibility for TPS: a letter dated March 23, 2004, from [REDACTED] who stated that the applicant has continuously lived in the United States since September 2000; a letter dated March 23, 2004, from [REDACTED] who stated that the applicant has continuously lived in the United States since September 2000; a letter dated March 23, 2004, from [REDACTED] who stated that the applicant has continuously lived in the United States since September 2000; copies of the applicant's Virginia State Income Tax and U.S. Individual Income Tax forms for the year 2000; and an Agreement to Lease between [REDACTED] and the applicant dated October 1, 2000, for an apartment located at [REDACTED] Virginia.

The Agreement to Lease dated October 1, 2000, is not supported by corroborative evidence, such as receipts for payment of rent. It is also noted that the agreement is generic and is not properly signed by both parties. It appears that [REDACTED] signed the document as a witness instead as the lessee. In addition, the tax documents provided by the applicant indicate that she filed as "single"; however, she claimed on her application for TPS that she was married and that her husband lived in the United States. Also, the statements provided by [REDACTED] regarding the applicant's claimed continuous residence and continuous physical presence in the United States are not supported by credible corroborative evidence. Affidavits from acquaintances are not, by themselves, persuasive evidence of residence or physical presence. The applicant has not submitted sufficient evidence to establish her continuous residence in the United States since February 13, 2001, and her continuous physical presence in the United States since March 9, 2001, to the date of filing her application. The applicant 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 will 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.