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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Administrative Appeals MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529 - 2090

U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

[REDACTED]

LI

FILE: [REDACTED]
MSC-05-039-10079

Office: NEW YORK

Date:

SEP 09 2009

IN RE: Applicant: [REDACTED]

APPLICATION: Application for Status as a Temporary Resident pursuant to Section 245A of the
Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

[REDACTED]

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. If your appeal was dismissed or rejected, all documents have been returned to the National Benefits Center. You no longer have a case pending before this office, and you are not entitled to file a motion to reopen or reconsider your case. If your appeal was sustained or remanded for further action, you will be contacted.

John F. Grissom
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for temporary resident status pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreements reached in *Catholic Social Services, Inc., et al., v. Ridge, et al.*, CIV. NO. S-86-1343-LKK (E.D. Cal) January 23, 2004, and *Felicity Mary Newman, et al., v. United States Immigration and Citizenship Services, et al.*, CIV. NO. 87-4757-WDK (C.D. Cal) February 17, 2004 (CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements), was denied by the director of the New York office. The decision is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant submitted a Form I-687, Application for Status as a Temporary Resident under Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), and a Form I-687 Supplement, CSS/Newman Class Membership Worksheet. The director denied the I-687 application, on the basis of reasons set forth in a Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID) the application, finding that the applicant had been absent from the United States for over 45 days and had failed to establish that his return had been delayed due to an emergent reason. Therefore, the director concluded that the applicant had not resided continuously in the United States for the requisite period and was not eligible to adjust to temporary resident status pursuant to the terms of the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements. However, the NOID was mailed to an incorrect address for the applicant. The applicant filed an appeal, stating that he never received a copy of the NOID.

On July 2, 2009 the AAO sent the applicant a follow-up communication informing him that additional documentation was required in order to complete the adjudication of his appeal, and requesting that the applicant provide additional evidence. Specifically, the AAO requested that the applicant provide a statement of all of his absences from the United States since his stated entry into the United States on June 11, 1981 throughout the requisite period. The applicant was also requested to provide additional evidence to document his absences from the United States throughout the requisite period. Finally, the applicant was asked to provide evidence that he entered the United States before January 1, 1982, and that he continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status since such date and through the date when he attempted to file a Form I-687 application or was caused not to timely file.

On appeal counsel for the applicant asserts that the applicant's absence was prolonged due to an emergent reason, and that his absence, therefore, did not interrupt the applicant's continuous residence.

An applicant for temporary resident status must establish entry into the United States before January 1, 1982, and continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since such date and through the date the application is filed. The applicant must also establish that he or she has been continuously physically present in the United States since November 6, 1986. The regulations clarify that the applicant must have been physically present in the United States from November 6, 1986 until the date of filing the application. 8 C.F.R. 245a.2(b)(1).

For purposes of establishing residence and physical presence under the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements, the term "until the date of filing" in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(b)(1) means until the date the

applicant attempted to file a completed Form I-687 application and fee or was caused not to timely file during the original legalization application period of May 5, 1987 to May 4, 1988. CSS Settlement Agreement, paragraph 11 at page 6; Newman Settlement Agreement, paragraph 11 at page 10.

The applicant shall be regarded as having resided continuously in the United States if at the time the application for temporary resident status is filed no single absence from the United States has exceeded 45 days, and the aggregate of all absences has not exceeded 180 days during the requisite period unless the applicant can establish that due to emergent reasons the return to the United States could not be accomplished within the time period allowed, the applicant was maintaining a residence in the United States, and the departure was not based on an order of deportation. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(c)(1).

Continuous unlawful residence is broken if an absence from the United States is more than 45 days on any one trip unless return could not be accomplished due to an "emergent reason". 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(h)(1)(i). "Emergent reasons" has been defined as "coming unexpectedly into being." *Matter of C*, 19 I&N Dec. 808 (Comm. 1988).

The applicant has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she has continuously resided and has been continuously physically present in the United States for the requisite periods, is admissible to the United States, and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status. The inference to be drawn from the documentation provided shall depend on the extent of the documentation, its credibility and amenability to verification. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(5).

Although the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3) provides an illustrative list of contemporaneous documents that an applicant may submit in support of his or her claim of continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since prior to January 1, 1982, the submission of any other relevant document is permitted pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(vi)(L). To meet his or her burden of proof, an applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from the applicant's own testimony. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6).

The "preponderance of the evidence" standard requires that the evidence demonstrate that the applicant's claim is "probably true," where the determination of "truth" is made based on the factual circumstances of each individual case. *Matter of E-M-*, 20 I&N Dec. 77, 79-80 (Comm. 1989). In evaluating the evidence, "[t]ruth is to be determined not by the quantity of evidence alone but by its quality." *Id.* Thus, in adjudicating the application pursuant to the preponderance of the evidence standard, the director must examine each piece of evidence for relevance, probative value, and credibility, both individually and within the context of the totality of the evidence, to determine whether the fact to be proven is probably true.

Even if the director has some doubt as to the truth, if the applicant submits relevant, probative, and credible evidence that leads the director to believe that the claim is "probably true" or "more likely than not," the applicant has satisfied the standard of proof. See *U.S. v. Cardozo-Fonseca*, 480 U.S. 421 (1987) (defining "more likely than not" as a greater than 50 percent probability of

something occurring). If the director can articulate a material doubt, it is appropriate for the director to either request additional evidence or, if that doubt leads the director to believe that the claim is probably not true, deny the application or petition. 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. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I & N Dec. 582, 591-592 (BIA).

In this case, at the time of completing his I-687 application, the applicant stated that he last entered the United States on October 26, 1987. At part 32 of the application he was asked to list his absences from the United States since his entry, and he listed one absence from the United States, from August 1987 until October 1987 to go to Bangladesh to visit his family. On June 11, 1991 the applicant completed a class member worksheet wherein he stated that he departed the United States on August 29, 1987 to visit family in Bangladesh and that he returned to the United States on October 26, 1987. In addition, at the time of his interview on the instant I-687 application on September 7, 2006 the applicant testified that he was absent from the United States for the same period of time. Although the applicant has not produced copies of any passport with which he traveled during the requisite period, his testimony indicates that he had an absence from the United States of at least 58 days during the requisite period.

On appeal, the applicant attests that the reason he was unable to return earlier as planned was that he suddenly became seriously ill and could not return sooner. The applicant states that his illness consisted of pain in the lower part of his body, for which he saw several doctors in Bangladesh over a period of about three months. The applicant has submitted several medical reports from doctors that have been treating him in the United States for chronic conditions since 2004, and for liver cancer since November 2008. However, these records do not confirm the applicant's assertion that he became ill while he was in Bangladesh; rather they indicate that he has had a long-term condition for which he is receiving treatment, and liver cancer which occurred after the applicant's return to the United States. Moreover, the applicant did not submit any evidence from any doctors who examined him when he became ill in Bangladesh. As noted above, to meet his burden of proof, the applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from his own testimony, and in this case he has failed to do so. Since the applicant has not provided any evidence other than his own attestation that it was his unexpected and sudden poor health that was the "emergent reason" for his failure to return to the United States in a timely manner, he has failed to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that he has continuously resided in an unlawful status in the United States for the requisite period, as required under both 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(5) and *Matter of E-M-*, *supra*.

Further, as noted above, a legalization applicant must show continuous physical presence in the United States from November 6, 1986 through May 4, 1988. Section 245A(a)(3)(A) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(3)(A). An absence during this period which is found to be brief, casual and innocent shall not break a legalization applicant's continuous physical presence. Section 245A(a)(3)(B) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(3)(B). *See e.g. Espinoza-Gutierrez v. Smith, INS, et al.*, 94 F.3d 1270 (9th Cir. 1996). The *Espinoza-Gutierrez* court held that a legalization applicant's absence would not represent a break in continuous physical presence if it was found that the absence was brief, casual and innocent as defined by the court in *Rosenburg v. Fleuti*,

374 U.S. 449 (1963) *See also Assa'ad v. U.S. Attorney General, INS*, 332 F.3d 1321 (11th Cir. 2003)(which affirmed the portion of the holding in *Espinoza-Gutierrez* relied upon here, but disagreed with a different aspect of that holding). The AAO finds that the applicant's absence from the United States in this case was not brief, casual and innocent in that the record indicates: that he was absent from the United States for more than 45 days.¹ *See Rosenberg, supra* (where the court looked to (1) the duration of the alien's absence; (2) the purpose of the absence; and (3) the need for special documentation to make the trip abroad to determine whether the absence was brief, innocent and casual or meaningfully disruptive of the alien's residence in the United States).

The applicant's admitted absence from the United States from August 29, 1987 to October 26, 1987, a period of more than 45 days, is clearly a break in any period of continuous residence and continuous physical presence he may have established. The applicant is, therefore, ineligible for temporary resident status under section 245A of the Act on this basis.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. This decision constitutes a final notice of ineligibility.

¹ The regulation implementing the statutory requirement of "continuous unlawful residence" in the United States defines that term as no single absence from the United States exceeding 45 days and absences in the aggregate not exceeding 180 days. *See, section 245A(a)(2)(A) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(2)(A) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(c)(1)(i).* The term "continuous physical presence" suggests that a shorter time frame should be applied to determine the permissible length of single and aggregate absences from the United States during the period from November 6, 1986 to May 4, 1988.