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

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FILE:

[REDACTED]
MSC 01 303 60778

Office: NEW YORK

Date: JAN 23 2009

IN RE:

Applicant:
[REDACTED]

APPLICATION:

Application for Status as a Permanent Resident pursuant to Section 1104 of the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-553, 114 Stat. 2762 (2000), *amended by* Life Act Amendments, Pub. L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763 (2000).

IN 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Grissom".

John F. Grissom, Acting Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for permanent resident status under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act was denied by the Director, New York, New York, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The director denied the application because the applicant had not demonstrated that he had continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status from before January 1, 1982, through May 4, 1988.

On appeal, counsel for the applicant asserted that the applicant has provided credible evidence to support his application. Counsel provided the telephone and fax numbers for two affiants who previously provided affidavits on behalf of the applicant. Counsel indicated that a brief and/or additional evidence would be submitted to the AAO within 30 days. However, more than a year later, no further correspondence has been presented by counsel or the applicant.

An applicant for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act 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 May 4, 1988. Section 1104(c)(2)(B) of the LIFE Act and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.11(b).

The applicant has the burden to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she has resided in the United States for the requisite periods, is admissible to the United States under the provisions of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status under this section. 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.12(e).

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, *Matter of E-M-* also stated that “[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.

Although the regulations provide an illustrative list of contemporaneous documents that an applicant may submit, the list also permits the submission of affidavits and any other relevant document. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(vi)(L).

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i) states that letters from employers attesting to an applicant's employment must: provide the applicant's address at the time of employment; identify the exact period of employment; show periods of layoff; state the applicant's duties; declare whether the information was taken from company records; and identify the location of such company records and state whether such records are accessible or in the alternative state the reason why such records are unavailable.

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant has furnished sufficient credible evidence to demonstrate that he continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status during the requisite period. Here, the applicant has failed to meet this burden.

In an attempt to establish continuous unlawful residence since before January 1, 1982, through May 4, 1988, the applicant provided the following evidence:

- An affidavit notarized February 14, 1992, from an acquaintance, [REDACTED] of Alexandria, Virginia, who attested to the applicant's Alexandria residence at [REDACTED] since June 1981.
- A statement from [REDACTED] who indicated that he drove the applicant to Canada on October 12, 1987.
- A letter dated January 31, 1992, from [REDACTED] assistant manager of [REDACTED], in Washington, D.C., who attested to the applicant's employment as a cleaner from December 4, 1987.
- A letter dated January 23, 1992, from [REDACTED], manager of [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] in Alexandria, Virginia, who attested to the applicant's employment as a porter from August 1981 to October 1987.

On August 21, 2007, the director issued a Notice of Intent to Deny, which advised the applicant that the affidavits and statement submitted appeared to be neither credible nor amenable to verification and that no evidence was submitted demonstrating that the affiants had direct personal knowledge of the events testified in their respective documents. The applicant, in response, submitted:

- A letter dated September 12, 2007, from [REDACTED], district pastor for [REDACTED] c. in New Jersey, who indicated that he has known the applicant since 1982 when he and the applicant were both Virginia residents. The affiant further indicated that the applicant became a member of the [REDACTED] when a branch was established in Virginia.
- An affidavit from [REDACTED] of Bronx, New York, who indicated that he first met the applicant at a New Year's Eve party in December 1981 and has kept in contact with the applicant since that time.

- An affidavit from [REDACTED] of Lenexa, Kansas, who indicated that he visited the applicant in June 1981 at an apartment complex in Alexandria, Virginia.
- Two metered envelopes postmarked August 22, 1982 and September 6, 1987 and addressed to the applicant at [REDACTED], Alexandria, Virginia.

The director, in denying the application, noted that [REDACTED] was contacted by telephone and he stated that he met the applicant in 1989 at the time he worked with the applicant in security; there was no point of contact for verification for [REDACTED]; and the telephone number listed on the letter from [REDACTED] was a fax number and, therefore, it was not possible to contact the affiant.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has determined that affidavits from third party individuals may be considered as evidence of continuous residence. *See Matter of E--M--, supra*. In ascertaining the evidentiary weight of such affidavits, USCIS must determine the basis for the affiant's knowledge of the information to which he is attesting; and whether the statement is plausible, credible, and consistent both internally and with the other evidence of record. *Id.*

Following the dicta set forth in *Matter of E-- M--, supra*, the affidavits would not necessarily be fatal to the applicant's claim, if the affidavits upon which the claim relies are consistent both internally and with the other evidence of record, plausible, credible, and if the affiant sets forth the basis of his knowledge for the testimony provided. The statements issued by counsel have been considered. However, the AAO does not view the documents discussed above as substantive enough to support a finding that the applicant entered the United States prior to January 1, 1982, and resided since that date through May 4, 1988, as he has presented contradictory and inconsistent documents, which undermines his credibility. Specifically:

The employment letters from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] failed to include the applicant's address at the time of employment as required under 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i). Under the same regulations, the affiants also failed to declare whether the information was taken from company records, and identify the location of such company records and state whether such records are accessible or in the alternative state the reason why such records are unavailable.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] provided no details regarding the nature of their relationship with the applicant or the basis for their continuing awareness of the applicant's residence. The absence of sufficiently detailed documentation to corroborate the applicant's claim of continuous residence for the entire requisite period seriously detracts from the credibility of his claim. Further, [REDACTED] partially based his knowledge of the applicant's residence in Virginia because the applicant had become a member of the Church of Pentecost when a branch was established in Virginia. However, the applicant, on his Form I-687 application, did not indicate that he was affiliated with a church during the requisite period.

Doubt cast on any aspect of an applicant's proof may lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the remaining evidence. It is incumbent upon an 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, in fact, lies, will not suffice. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I. & N. Dec. 582 (BIA 1988).

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.12(e) provides that “[a]n alien applying for adjustment of status under [section 1104 of the LIFE Act] has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she has resided in the United States for the requisite periods.” Preponderance of the evidence is defined as “evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.” Black’s Law Dictionary 1064 (5th ed. 1979). See *Matter of Lemhammad*, 20 I&N Dec. 316, 320, Note 5 (BIA 1991). Given the credibility issues arising from the documentation provided by the applicant, it is determined that the applicant has not met his burden of proof. The applicant has not established, by a preponderance of the evidence, that he entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and resided in this country in an unlawful status continuously from before January 1, 1982 through May 4, 1988, as required under 1104(c)(2)(B)(i) of the LIFE Act and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.11(b). Given this, the applicant is ineligible for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act.

The AAO maintains plenary power to review each appeal on a *de novo* basis. 5 U.S.C. 557(b) (“On appeal from or review of the initial decision, the agency has all the powers which it would have in making the initial decision except as it may limit the issues on notice or by rule.”); see also, *Janka v. U.S. Dept. of Transp., NTSB*, 925 F.2d 1147, 1149 (9th Cir. 1991). The AAO’s *de novo* authority has been long recognized by the federal courts. See, e.g. *Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2d Cir. 1989).

As previously noted, in an attempt to establish his continuous residence in the United States during the requisite period, the applicant provided an employment letter from Sam Otoo, who claimed to be the manager of [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] in Alexandria, Virginia. The record, however, contains a letter dated February 18, 1999, from a representative of [REDACTED] in Arlington, Virginia, which disputes this claim. The representative indicated that [REDACTED] was the property management company for [REDACTED] from 1983 to 1986 and that the address, [REDACTED], was part of the complex. The representative further indicated that there was no record of [REDACTED] existing at this address.

This fact tends to establish that the applicant utilized documentation in a fraudulent manner in an attempt to support his claim of residence in the United States during the requisite period. By engaging in such an action, the applicant has irreparably harmed his own credibility as well as the credibility of his claim of continuous residence in the United States for requisite period.

The applicant has, therefore, failed to establish that he resided in a continuous unlawful status in the United States from before January 1, 1982 through May 4, 1988, as required under section 1104(c)(2)(B) of the LIFE Act. Therefore, the applicant is ineligible for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act.

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