



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

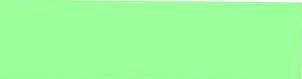
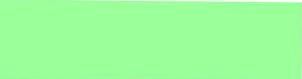
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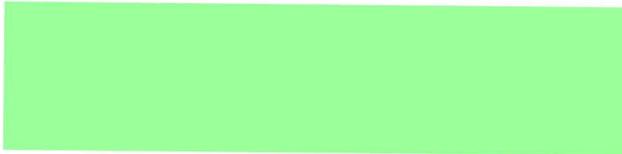
OFFICE: TEXAS SERVICE CENTER

FILE: 

IN RE: Petitioner: 
Beneficiary: 

PETITION: Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker as a Skilled Worker or Professional Pursuant to Section 203(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All of the documents related to this matter have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Please be advised that any further inquiry that you might have concerning your case must be made to that office.

Thank you,



Ron Rosenberg
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

cc: 

DISCUSSION: The preference visa petition was denied by the Director, Texas Service Center (the director). The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be rejected pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(v)(A)(1). The director's decision to deny the petition will not be disturbed.

The petitioner is a trucking business. It seeks to permanently employ the beneficiary in the United States as a truck mechanic, pursuant to Section 203(b)(3)(A)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act ("the Act"), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A)(i).¹ As required by statute, the petition is accompanied by a Form ETA 750, Application for Alien Employment Certification, approved by the United States Department of Labor (DOL). The director determined that the petitioner had failed to establish that it had the continuing ability to pay the beneficiary the proffered wage beginning on the priority date of the visa petition.

On appeal to the AAO, the beneficiary's new employer, [REDACTED] through its counsel, contends that the director improperly denied the petition.²

The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. *See Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004). The AAO considers all pertinent evidence in the record, including new evidence properly submitted upon appeal.³

As a threshold issue, we must determine whether the beneficiary's new employer has legal standing to appeal in this proceeding.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(1)(iii)(B) unequivocally states:

For purposes of this section and §§ 103.4 and 103.5 of this part, affected party (in addition to the Service) means the person or entity with legal standing in a proceeding. **It does not include the beneficiary of a visa petition.** (Emphasis added).

¹ Section 203(b)(3)(A)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A)(i), provides for the granting of preference classification to qualified immigrants who are capable, at the time of petitioning for classification under this paragraph, of performing skilled labor (requiring at least two years training or experience), not of a temporary nature, for which qualified workers are not available in the United States.

² Counsel for the beneficiary's new employer will be provided a courtesy copy of this decision.

³ The submission of additional evidence on appeal is allowed by the instructions to the Form I-290B, which are incorporated into the regulations by the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(a)(1). The record in the instant case provides no reason to preclude consideration of any of the documents newly submitted on appeal. *See Matter of Soriano*, 19 I&N Dec. 764 (BIA 1988).

Further, the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(v)(A)(1) states, “An appeal filed by a person or entity not entitled to file it must be rejected as improperly filed.”

The language of the cited regulations explicitly states that only the affected party has legal standing and is authorized to file the appeal in this matter. Neither the beneficiary nor his counsel has legal standing in this visa petition proceeding. The beneficiary’s new employer is also not the affected party and therefore, has no legal standing to file the appeal.

In this case, however, the appeal was filed and authorized by the beneficiary’s new employer. The record contains no evidence showing that the original petitioner consented to the filing of the appeal.⁴ For this reason, we find that [REDACTED] is not entitled to file the appeal in this case. Further, because the beneficiary’s new employer is not entitled to appeal in this proceeding, the appeal was not properly filed, and the appeal must, therefore, be rejected.

On appeal, counsel for the beneficiary’s new employer infers that [REDACTED] has legal standing to appeal the matter and continue the proceeding since the beneficiary has ported from the petitioner pursuant to section 204(j) of the Act, and that the beneficiary’s new employer may take place of and become the petitioner of an I-140 petition in situations involving the application of section 106(c) of the American Competitiveness in the Twenty First Century Act of 2000 (AC21).⁵ We disagree.

To address this issue, we must first analyze section 106(c) of AC21 and determine the interpretation of the statute as intended by Congress. Specifically, section 106(c) of AC21 added the following to section 204(j) of the Act:

Job Flexibility for Long Delayed Applicants for Adjustment of Status to Permanent Residence – A petition under subsection (a)(1)(D) [since redesignated section 204(a)(1)(F)] for an individual whose application for adjustment of status pursuant to section 245 has been filed and remained unadjudicated for 180 days or more shall remain valid with respect to a new job if the individual changes jobs or employers if the new job is in the same or a similar occupational classification as the job for which the petition was filed.

⁴ During the adjudication of the appeal, evidence has come to light that in this matter the petitioning business’ status is dissolved. See the attached print-outs from <http://www.ilsos.gov/corporatellc> the official website of the state of Illinois, division of corporate and commercial code, which indicates that the business status of [REDACTED] is involuntarily dissolved as of September 12, 2008, in the state of Illinois. If the petitioning business is no longer an active business, the petition and its appeal to this office have become moot.⁴ Therefore, even if this appeal were not being rejected, it would be dismissed as moot, baring independent objective evidence to the contrary.

⁵ On October 17, 2000 Congress passed section 106(c) of AC21, which amended section 204(j) of the Act; 8 U.S.C. § 1154(j).

AC21, Pub. L. No. 106-313, § 106(c), 114 Stat. 1251, 1254 (Oct. 17, 2000); § 204(j) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1154(j).

Section 212(a)(5)(A)(iv) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(5)(A)(iv), states further:

Long Delayed Adjustment Applicants- A certification made under clause (i) with respect to an individual whose petition is covered by section 204(j) shall remain valid with respect to a new job accepted by the individual after the individual changes jobs or employers if the new job is in the same or a similar occupational classification as the job for which the certification was issued.

Statutory interpretation begins with the language of the statute itself. *Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare v. Davenport*, 495 U.S. 552 (1990). Statutory language must be given conclusive weight unless the legislature expresses an intention to the contrary. *Int'l. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union No. 474, AFL-CIO v. NLRB*, 814 F.2d 697 (D.C. Cir. 1987). The plain meaning of the statutory language should control except in rare cases in which a literal application of the statute will produce a result demonstrably at odds with the intent of its drafters, in which case it is the intention of the legislators, rather than the strict language, that controls. *Samuels, Kramer & Co. v. CIR*, 930 F.2d 975 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 112 S. Ct. 416 (1991).

In addition, we are expected to give the words used their ordinary meaning. *Chevron, U.S.A., Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.*, 467 U.S. 837 (1984). We are to construe the language in question in harmony with the thrust of related provisions and with the statute as a whole. *K Mart Corp. v. Cartier Inc.*, 486 U.S. 281, 291 (1988) (holding that construction of language which takes into account the design of the statute as a whole is preferred); *see also COIT Independence Joint Venture v. Federal Sav. and Loan Ins. Corp.*, 489 U.S. 561 (1989); *Matter of W-F-*, 21 I&N Dec. 503 (BIA 1996).

Counsel infers that the beneficiary and his new employer were given the authority by the petitioner of the Form I-140 petition once the petition was approved, the I-485 application had been pending for 180 days, and the beneficiary ported to a new employer and began her new employment in a similar position as the job offered by the petitioner. It is true that, absent revocation, the beneficiary would have been eligible for adjustment of status with a new employer provided, as counsel points out, that "the new job is in the same or similar occupation as that for which the beneficiary's petition was filed." However, critical to section 106(c) of AC21, the petition must be "valid" to begin with if it is to "**remain valid with respect to a new job.**" Section 204(j) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1154(j) (emphasis added).⁶

⁶ Furthermore, it would subvert the statutory scheme of the U.S. immigration laws to find that a petition is valid when that petition was never approved or, even if it was approved, if it was filed on behalf of an alien that was never entitled to the requested immigrant classification. We will not construe section 204(j) of the Act in a manner that would allow ineligible aliens to gain immigrant status simply by filing visa petitions and adjustment applications, thereby increasing

The statutory language provides no benefit or right for a new employer to "substitute" itself for the previous petitioner. Section 106(c) of AC21 states that the underlying Form I-140 petition "shall remain valid with respect to a new job if the individual changes jobs or employers if the new job is in the same or a similar occupational classification as the job for which the petition was filed." Pub. L. No. 106-313, § 106(c), 114 Stat. 1251, 1254 (Oct. 17, 2000); § 204(j) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1154(j). Thus, the statute simply permits the beneficiary to change jobs and remain eligible to adjust based on a prior approved petition if the processing times reach or exceed 180 days.

There is no evidence that Congress intended to confer anything more than a benefit to beneficiaries of long delayed adjustment applications. In other words, the plain language of the statute indicates that Congress intended to provide the alien, as a "long delayed applicant for adjustment," with the ability to change jobs if the individual's Form I-485 took 180 days or more to process. Section 106(c) of AC21 does not mention the rights of a subsequent employer and does not provide other employers with the ability to take over already adjudicated immigrant petitions.

Counsel for the beneficiary's new employer has failed to show that the passage of AC21 granted any rights or benefits to subsequent employers of aliens eligible for the job portability provisions of section 106(c). Based on a review of the statute and legislative history, the AAO must reject counsel's inferences that the beneficiary and/or his new employer have now become the petitioner, and an affected party, in these proceedings.

As no evidence of record suggests that the original petitioner authorized the filing of the appeal, the appeal was improperly filed pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(v)(A)(1) and must be rejected. Further, since the appeal is rejected, we will not elaborate on the question of whether the beneficiary qualifies for the position offered and whether the petitioner has established its ability to pay the proffered wage.

Furthermore, the appeal must be rejected because the AAO does not exercise appellate jurisdiction over appeals from a director's Form I-485 denial.⁷ The AAO exercises appellate jurisdiction

USCIS backlogs, in the hopes that the application might remain unadjudicated for 180 days. In a case pertaining to the revocation of a Form I-140 petition, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals determined that the government's authority to revoke a Form I-140 petition under section 205 of the Act survived portability under section 204(j) of the Act. *Herrera v. USCIS*, 571 F.3d 881 (9th Cir. 2009). Citing a 2005 AAO decision, the Ninth Circuit reasoned that in order to remain valid under section 204(j) of the Act, the I-140 petition must have been valid from the start. The Ninth Circuit stated that if the plaintiff's argument prevailed, an alien who exercised portability would be shielded from revocation, but an alien who remained with the petitioning employer would not share the same immunity. The Ninth Circuit noted that it was not the intent of Congress to grant extra benefits to those who changed jobs.

⁷ The current Form I-290B references the receipt file number [REDACTED] which is the receipt number for the Form I-485 denial.

over the matters described at 8 C.F.R. §103.1(f)(3)(iii) (as in effect on February 28, 2003). *See* DHS Delegation Number 0150.1; 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(iv). The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) delegates the authority to adjudicate appeals to the AAO pursuant to the authority vested in her through the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-296. *See* DHS Delegation Number 0150.1 (effective March 1, 2003); *see also* 8 C.F.R. § 2.1 (2003). The AAO exercises appellate jurisdiction over the matters described at 8 C.F.R. § 103.1(f)(3)(iii) (as in effect on February 28, 2003). *See* DHS Delegation Number 0150.1(U) *supra*; 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(iv). Accordingly, since the AAO does not have jurisdiction over appeals of Form I-485 decisions, this appeal is not properly before the AAO.

ORDER: The appeal is rejected as improperly filed. The director's decision to deny the petition remains undisturbed.