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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529-2090



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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[REDACTED]

FILE:

[REDACTED]

Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER

Date: MAR 15 2011

IN RE:

Petitioner: [REDACTED]

PETITION: Petition for Immigrant Abused Spouse Pursuant to Section 204(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1154(a)(1)(A)(iii)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

SELF-REPRESENTED

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.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied by us in reaching our decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. The specific requirements for filing such a request can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. All motions must be submitted to the office that originally decided your case by filing a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires that any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you.


Perry Rhew

Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Director, Vermont Service Center, denied the immigrant visa petition. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be summarily dismissed. The petition remains denied.

The petitioner seeks immigrant classification pursuant to section 204(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (“the Act”), 8 U.S.C. § 1154(a)(1)(A)(iii), as an alien battered or subjected to extreme cruelty by a United States citizen.

The director denied the petition, after determining that the applicant had not established that he had been subjected to battery or extreme cruelty by a United States citizen, that he is a person of good moral character, and that he entered into the marriage in good faith.

Applicable Law and Regulations

Section 204(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Act provides that an alien who is the spouse of a United States citizen may self-petition for immigrant classification if the alien demonstrates that he or she entered into the marriage with the United States citizen spouse in good faith and that during the marriage, the alien or a child of the alien was battered or subjected to extreme cruelty perpetrated by the alien’s spouse. In addition, the alien must show that he or she is eligible to be classified as an immediate relative under section 201(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Act based on his or her relationship to the abusive spouse, resided with the abusive spouse, and is a person of good moral character. Section 204(a)(1)(A)(iii)(II) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1154(a)(1)(A)(iii)(II).

Section 204(a)(1)(J) of the Act states, in pertinent part:

In acting on petitions filed under clause (iii) or (iv) of subparagraph (A) . . . , or in making determinations under subparagraphs (C) and (D), the [Secretary of Homeland Security] shall consider any credible evidence relevant to the petition. The determination of what evidence is credible and the weight to be given that evidence shall be within the sole discretion of the [Secretary of Homeland Security].

The eligibility requirements are explained in the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.2(c)(1), which states, in pertinent part:

(vi) *Battery or extreme cruelty.* For the purpose of this chapter, the phrase “was battered by or was the subject of extreme cruelty” includes, but is not limited to, being the victim of any act or threatened act of violence, including any forceful detention, which results or threatens to result in physical or mental injury. Psychological or sexual abuse or exploitation, including rape, molestation, incest (if the victim is a minor), or forced prostitution shall be considered acts of violence. Other abusive actions may also be acts of violence under certain circumstances, including acts that, in and of themselves, may not initially appear violent but that are a part of an overall pattern of violence. The qualifying abuse must have been committed by the citizen . . . spouse, must have been perpetrated

against the self-petitioner . . . and must have taken place during the self-petitioner's marriage to the abuser.

(vii) *Good moral character.* A self-petitioner will be found to lack good moral character if he or she is a person described in section 101(f) of the Act. Extenuating circumstances may be taken into account if the person has not been convicted of an offense or offenses but admits to the commission of an act or acts that could show a lack of good moral character under section 101(f) of the Act. A person who was subjected to abuse in the form of forced prostitution or who can establish that he or she was forced to engage in other behavior that could render the person excludable under section 212(a) of the Act would not be precluded from being found to be a person of good moral character, provided the person has not been convicted for the commission of the offense or offenses in a court of law. A self-petitioner will also be found to lack good moral character, unless he or she establishes extenuating circumstances, if he or she willfully failed or refused to support dependents; or committed unlawful acts that adversely reflect upon his or her moral character, or was convicted or imprisoned for such acts, although the acts do not require an automatic finding of lack of good moral character. A self-petitioner's claim of good moral character will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the provisions of section 101(f) of the Act and the standards of the average citizen in the community. If the results of record checks conducted prior to the issuance of an immigrant visa or approval of an application for adjustment of status disclose that the self-petitioner is no longer a person of good moral character or that he or she has not been a person of good moral character in the past, a pending self-petition will be denied or the approval of a self-petition will be revoked.

* * *

(ix) *Good faith marriage.* A spousal self-petition cannot be approved if the self-petitioner entered into the marriage to the abuser for the primary purpose of circumventing the immigration laws. A self-petition will not be denied, however, solely because the spouses are not living together and the marriage is no longer viable.

The evidentiary guidelines for a self-petition under section 204(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Act are further explained in the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.2(c)(2), which states, in pertinent part:

Evidence for a spousal self-petition –

(i) *General.* Self-petitioners are encouraged to submit primary evidence whenever possible. The Service will consider, however, any credible evidence relevant to the petition. The determination of what evidence is credible and the weight to be given that evidence shall be within the sole discretion of the Service.

* * *

(iv) *Abuse.* Evidence of abuse may include, but is not limited to, reports and affidavits from police, judges and other court officials, medical personnel, school officials, clergy, social workers, and other social service agency personnel. Persons who have obtained an order of protection against the abuser or have taken other legal steps to end the abuse are strongly encouraged to submit copies of the relating legal documents. Evidence that the abuse victim sought safe-haven in a battered women's shelter or similar refuge may be relevant, as may a combination of documents such as a photograph of the visibly injured self-petitioner supported by affidavits. Other forms of credible relevant evidence will also be considered. Documentary proof of non-qualifying abuses may only be used to establish a pattern of abuse and violence and to support a claim that qualifying abuse also occurred.

(v) *Good moral character.* Primary evidence of the self-petitioner's good moral character is the self-petitioner's affidavit. The affidavit should be accompanied by a local police clearance or a state-issued criminal background check from each locality or state in the United States in which the self-petitioner has resided for six or more months during the 3-year period immediately preceding the filing of the self-petition. Self-petitioners who lived outside the United States during this time should submit a police clearance, criminal background check, or similar report issued by the appropriate authority in each foreign country in which he or she resided for six or more months during the 3-year period immediately preceding the filing of the self-petition. If police clearances, criminal background checks, or similar reports are not available for some or all locations, the self-petitioner may include an explanation and submit other evidence with his or her affidavit. The Service will consider other credible evidence of good moral character, such as affidavits from responsible persons who can knowledgeably attest to the self-petitioner's good moral character.

* * *

(vii) *Good faith marriage.* Evidence of good faith at the time of marriage may include, but is not limited to, proof that one spouse has been listed as the other's spouse on insurance policies, property leases, income tax forms, or bank accounts; and testimony or other evidence regarding courtship, wedding ceremony, shared residence and experiences. Other types of readily available evidence might include the birth certificates of children born to the abuser and the spouse; police, medical, or court documents providing information about the relationship; and affidavits of persons with personal knowledge of the relationship. All credible relevant evidence will be considered.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. §103.3(a)(1)(v) states, in pertinent part: "An officer to whom an appeal is taken shall summarily dismiss any appeal when the party concerned fails to identify specifically any erroneous conclusion of law or statement of fact for the appeal."

Pertinent Facts and Procedural History

The petitioner is a native and citizen of the Bahamas. He entered the United States on or about November 17, 2006 on a B-2 visa. On [REDACTED], the petitioner married C-J-¹, a United States citizen. On December 29, 2006, C-J- filed a Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, on the petitioner's behalf and the petitioner concurrently filed a Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status. The Form I-130 was initially approved on May 3, 2007 but was subsequently revoked on January 16, 2008. On April 14, 2008, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) denied the petitioner's Form I-485. On June 9, 2008, the petitioner filed a Form I-360, Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er) or Special Immigrant. The petitioner noted on the Form I-360 that he had resided with C-J- from December 2006 to July 2007. On January 8, 2010, the director issued a request for evidence (RFE). On June 23, 2010, upon consideration of the totality of the record, the director denied the petition.

The petitioner timely submits a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, checking the box on the Form I-290B indicating that a brief and/or additional evidence is attached. The petitioner states on the Form I-290B that his car was stolen and that his car had evidence for USCIS in it when it was stolen. The petitioner also notes that he has made peace with God and has forgiven his wife who had called him the previous week and told him that she hopes for the best for him. The petitioner notes that he does not have any money and that he would like to work and be able to visit his father in the Bahamas. The petitioner attaches a copy of a [REDACTED] General Warranty Deed showing a transfer of property from the petitioner and the claimed abusive spouse to another individual that was recorded [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] records. A cover sheet accompanying the warranty deed, dated [REDACTED] indicates that the warranty deed was not executed in the office of the attorney that prepared the deed and that the petitioner should retain a lawyer to straighten out the situation. The petitioner also provided previously submitted evidence.

Abuse

As the director determined, the record does not include sufficient probative evidence establishing that the petitioner was subjected to battery or extreme cruelty by his United States citizen spouse. The petitioner does not provide evidence or argument on appeal on this issue.

Good Moral Character

In the director's RFE, the director notified the petitioner that the record did not include criminal history records and police clearances for [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] locations where the petitioner claimed that he currently or had previously resided. The petitioner does not provide police clearances for these locations and does not provide explanations regarding his failure to provide such clearances. The petitioner does not directly address this issue on appeal.

¹ Name withheld to protect the individual's identity.

Good Faith Entry into Marriage

As the director determined, the record does not include sufficient evidence establishing that the petitioner entered into the marriage in good faith. The AAO has reviewed the general warranty deed offered on appeal, but notes that a transfer of property does not assist in establishing the petitioner's intent in entering into the marriage. The petitioner does not specifically address this issue on appeal.

Summary Dismissal

The director in this matter determined that the petitioner had not submitted sufficient probative evidence demonstrating that he had been subjected to battery or extreme cruelty perpetrated by the petitioner's United States citizen spouse, that he is a person of good moral character, and that he had entered into the marriage in good faith. We concur with the director's assessment of the relevant evidence. The petitioner does not provide any further evidence or argument on appeal that overcomes the director's decision. The petitioner fails to identify specifically an erroneous conclusion of law or a statement of fact in this proceeding. Accordingly, the appeal must be summarily dismissed pursuant to the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(1)(v).

Conclusion

In visa petition proceedings, the burden of proving eligibility for the benefit sought remains entirely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, that burden has not been met.

ORDER: The appeal is summarily dismissed. The petition remains denied.