

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

[REDACTED]

C,

Date: NOV 28 2012 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER FILE: [REDACTED]

IN RE: Petitioner: [REDACTED]
Beneficiary: [REDACTED]

PETITION: Immigrant Petition for Special Immigrant Religious Worker Pursuant to Section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(4), as described at Section 101(a)(27)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(C)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

[REDACTED]

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 AAO inappropriately applied the law in reaching its decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen in accordance with the instructions on Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. The specific requirements for filing such a motion can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. **Do not file any motion directly with the AAO.** Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires any motion to be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,

U Deadnick
f Ron Rosenberg
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Director, California Service Center, initially approved the employment-based immigrant visa petition on August 8, 2007. On further review, the director determined that the beneficiary was not eligible for the visa preference classification. Accordingly, the director properly served the petitioner with a Notice of Intent to Revoke (NOIR) the approval of the preference visa petition stating the reasons therefore and subsequently exercised her discretion to revoke the approval of the petition on June 7, 2012. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The AAO will dismiss the appeal.

The petitioner is a Buddhist temple. It seeks to classify the beneficiary as a special immigrant religious worker pursuant to section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(4), to perform services as a monk.

Section 203(b)(4) of the Act provides classification to qualified special immigrant religious workers as described in section 101(a)(27)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(C), which pertains to an immigrant who:

(i) for at least 2 years immediately preceding the time of application for admission, has been a member of a religious denomination having a bona fide nonprofit, religious organization in the United States;

(ii) seeks to enter the United States –

(I) solely for the purpose of carrying on the vocation of a minister of that religious denomination,

(II) before September 30, 2012, in order to work for the organization at the request of the organization in a professional capacity in a religious vocation or occupation, or

(III) before September 30, 2012, in order to work for the organization (or for a bona fide organization which is affiliated with the religious denomination and is exempt from taxation as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) at the request of the organization in a religious vocation or occupation; and

(iii) has been carrying on such vocation, professional work, or other work continuously for at least the 2-year period described in clause (i).

Section 205 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1155, states that the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security “may, at any time, for what he deems to be good and sufficient cause, revoke the approval of any petition approved by him under section 204.”

Regarding the revocation on notice of an immigrant petition under section 205 of the Act, the Board of Immigration Appeals has stated:

In *Matter of Estime*, . . . this Board stated that a notice of intention to revoke a visa petition is properly issued for "good and sufficient cause" where the evidence of record at the time the notice is issued, if unexplained and un rebutted, would warrant a denial of the visa petition based upon the petitioner's failure to meet his burden of proof. The decision to revoke will be sustained where the evidence of record at the time the decision is rendered, including any evidence or explanation submitted by the petitioner in rebuttal to the notice of intention to revoke, would warrant such denial.

Matter of Ho, 19 I&N Dec. 582, 590 (BIA 1988)(citing *Matter of Estime*, 19 I&N 450 (BIA 1987)).

By itself, the director's realization that a petition was incorrectly approved is good and sufficient cause for the issuance of a notice of intent to revoke an immigrant petition. *Id.*

At the time the approval of the petition was revoked, the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(m)(1) provided:

(m) *Religious workers.* (1) An alien, or any person in behalf of the alien, may file an I-360 visa petition for classification under section 203(b)(4) of the Act as a section 101(a)(27)(C) special immigrant religious worker. Such a petition may be filed by or for an alien, who (either abroad or in the United States) for at least the two years immediately preceding the filing of the petition has been a member of a religious denomination which has a bona fide nonprofit religious organization in the United States. The alien must be coming to the United States solely for the purpose of carrying on the vocation of a minister of that religious denomination, working for the organization at the organization's request in a professional capacity in a religious vocation or occupation for the organization or a bona fide organization which is affiliated with the religious denomination and is exempt from taxation as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at the request of the organization. All three types of religious workers must have been performing the vocation, professional work, or other work continuously (either abroad or in the United States) for at least the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition. Professional workers and other workers must obtain permanent resident status through immigration or adjustment of status on or before September 30, 1997, in order to immigrate under section 203(b)(4) of the Act as section 101(a)(27)(C) special immigrant religious workers.

On April 5, 2012, USCIS issued a notice to the petitioner indicating its intent to revoke the approval of the petition based in part on information obtained during an interview with the beneficiary regarding his Form I-485, Application for Adjustment of Status. The director discussed inconsistencies in the beneficiary's statements regarding his work history. The director

also noted that a site visit to the beneficiary's purported former employer in Cambodia uncovered information which directly contradicted claims made by the beneficiary. Further, the director noted that the beneficiary is currently pursuing a degree in agriculture and is not engaged in religious work. The director instructed the petitioner that it had 30 days in which to offer evidence in support of the petition and in opposition to the proposed revocation. The petitioner did not respond to the notice.

On June 7, 2012, the director revoked the petition. The director referenced the previously issued Notice of Intent to Revoke (NOIR), providing the full text of that notice. The director then stated:

A reasonable amount of time was afforded to offer evidence in support of the petition and in opposition to the proposed revocation.

USCIS's records indicate that since the notice of intent to revoke was issued, USCIS has received no communication concerning this matter. Therefore, as of this date, the petition is revoked.

On June 25, 2012, the petitioner appealed the revocation of the petition. On appeal, counsel for the petitioner makes no statement about the petitioner's failure to respond to the June 7, 2012 NOIR. Instead, counsel makes arguments and submits evidence in response to the director's findings as set forth in the NOIR.

The arguments and evidence responding to the findings in the NOIR were submitted by the petitioner for the first time on appeal and will not be considered by the AAO. The petitioner was put on notice of required evidence and given a reasonable opportunity to provide it for the record before the petition was revoked. The petitioner failed to submit the requested evidence and now submits it on appeal. However, the AAO will not consider this evidence for any purpose. *See Matter of Soriano*, 19 I&N Dec. 764, 766 (BIA 1988); *Matter of Obaigbena*, 19 I&N Dec. 533, 537 (BIA 1988).

The record as constituted before the director indicates that the petitioner submitted no evidence in response to the notice of intent to revoke the petition. Accordingly, the AAO finds no error on the part of the director and agrees with the director's finding that the petitioner failed to overcome the grounds for revocation. Therefore, the AAO affirms the director's decision to revoke the petition.

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 AAO affirms the director's decision to revoke approval of the petition. The appeal is dismissed.