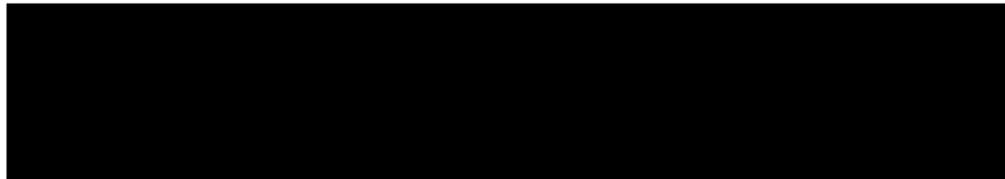


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U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)  
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS 2090  
Washington, DC 20529-2090



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services



D2

DATE **APR 04 2012**

OFFICE: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER

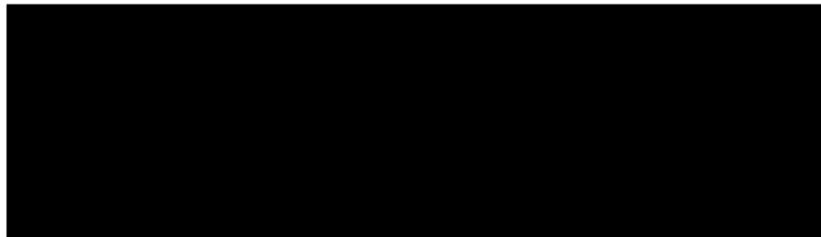


IN RE:



PETITION: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. Please note that all documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Please also note that any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Thank you,

Perry Rhew  
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The service center director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be rejected as untimely filed. The AAO will return the matter to the director for consideration as a motion to reopen and reconsider.

In order to properly file an appeal, the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(i) provides that the affected party or the attorney or representative of record must file the complete appeal within 30 days of service of the unfavorable decision. If the decision was mailed, the appeal must be filed within 33 days. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.8(b). The date of filing is not the date of mailing, but the date of actual receipt. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(a)(7)(i).

The record indicates that the service center director issued the decision on August 18, 2011. It is noted that the service center director properly gave notice to the petitioner that it had 33 days to file the appeal. Neither the Act nor the pertinent regulations grant the AAO authority to extend this time limit.

Although counsel dated the Form I-290B (Notice of Appeal of Motion) September 16, 2011, it was not properly filed with the service center until October 12, 2011, or 55 days after the decision was issued. Accordingly, the appeal was untimely filed.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(v)(B)(2) states that, if an untimely appeal meets the requirements of a motion to reopen or a motion to reconsider, the appeal must be treated as a motion, and a decision must be made on the merits of the case. The official having jurisdiction over a motion is the official who made the last decision in the proceeding, in this case the Director of the California Service Center. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(ii).

Even if the appeal had been properly filed, however, the appeal would have been dismissed as the issues presented are moot. Specifically, a review of the record demonstrates a more critical, but related issue pertaining to the petitioner's eligibility to extend its employment of the beneficiary in H-1B status. Particularly, the petition must be denied as it was filed after the expiration of the petition it sought to extend. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(14) (stating that a "request for a petition extension may be filed only if the validity of the original petition has not expired"). In this matter, the petition that the petitioner sought to extend (WAC 10 230 50356) expired on March 5, 2011. The instant petition was filed on March 22, 2011, 17 days after the original petition's expiration.

As opposed to a discretionary extension of stay application, there is no discretion to grant a late-filed petition extension. In this matter, the director did not raise this issue in the denial, and thus it appears that the director may have erroneously exercised favorable discretion to the petitioner under the provisions of 8 C.F.R. § 214.1(c)(4)(i). The director's error is harmless, however, because the AAO conducts a *de novo* review, evaluating the sufficiency of the evidence in the record according to its probative value and credibility, and the omission of this non-discretionary ground for denial did not result in the improper granting of a benefit in this matter, i.e., the error did not change the outcome of this case. *See Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004); *Black's Law Dictionary*

563 (7th Ed., West 1999) (defining the term "*harmless error*" and stating that it is not grounds for reversal).

As the appeal was untimely filed, the appeal must be rejected. The matter will therefore be returned to the director. If the director determines that the late appeal meets the requirements of a motion, the motion shall be granted and a new decision will be issued.

**ORDER:** The appeal is rejected.