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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

D6

FILE:

Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER

Date:

IN RE:

Petitioner:

Beneficiary:

MAR 01 2011

PETITION: Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) Pursuant to § 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K)

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 nonimmigrant visa petition. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a citizen of the United States who seeks to classify the beneficiary, a native and citizen of Ukraine, as the fiancé(e) of a United States citizen pursuant to § 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K).

The director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition because the record contains no evidence that the petitioner and the beneficiary personally met within the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition or that the petitioner qualified for a waiver of that requirement. On appeal, the petitioner states, in part, that he was unable to travel due to work commitments and his son's psychological instability after the illness and death of his mother. As supporting documentation, the petitioner submits the following documentation: his late wife's death certificate reflecting her date of death as February 23, 2009; a letter dated August 3, 2009, addressed to the petitioner's son's university from a bereavement coordinator; an undated letter addressed to the petitioner from a bereavement coordinator, describing available bereavement programs; a copy of the petitioner's IRS Form 1040, Schedule C, Profit or Loss From Business, for 2009; the petitioner's bank account information showing business-related transactions; a work order assigned to the petitioner; and evidence of the petitioner's rental property.

A "fiancé(e)" is defined at Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act as:

Subject to subsections (d) and (p) of section 214, an alien who -

(i) is the fiancée or fiancé of a citizen of the United States . . . and who seeks to enter the United States solely to conclude a valid marriage with the petitioner within ninety days after admission.

Section 214(d)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d)(1), states in pertinent part that a fiancé(e) petition:

[s]hall be approved only after satisfactory evidence is submitted by the petitioner to establish that the parties have previously met in person within 2 years before the date of filing the petition, have a bona fide intention to marry, and are legally able and actually willing to conclude a valid marriage in the United States within a period of ninety days after the alien's arrival

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the petitioner may be exempted from this requirement for a meeting if it is established that compliance would:

- (1) result in extreme hardship to the petitioner; or
- (2) that compliance would violate strict and long-established customs of the beneficiary's foreign culture or social practice, as where marriages are traditionally arranged by the parents of the contracting parties and the prospective bride and groom are prohibited from meeting subsequent to the

arrangement and prior to the wedding day. In addition to establishing that the required meeting would be a violation of custom or practice, the petitioner must also establish that any and all other aspects of the traditional arrangements have been or will be met in accordance with the custom or practice.

The regulation does not define what may constitute extreme hardship to the petitioner. Therefore, each claim of extreme hardship must be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account the totality of the petitioner's circumstances. Generally, a director looks at whether the petitioner can demonstrate the existence of circumstances that are (1) not within the power of the petitioner to control or change, and (2) likely to last for a considerable duration or the duration cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

The petitioner filed the Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) (Form I-129F) with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on February 12, 2010. Therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met in person between February 12, 2008 and February 12, 2010.

When he filed the petition, the petitioner responded "No" to question #18 on the I-129F Petition that asks whether he and the beneficiary had met in person within the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition. The petitioner stated, in part, that he met the beneficiary's mother in January 2007, while installing a satellite television system, and that in December 2007, he started writing to the beneficiary, whereupon they became very good friends. The petitioner also stated that he had been unable to travel in the past eight years due the terminal illness of his wife, and that, due to his responsibility as a single parent and self employer, traveling overseas would result in extreme hardship.

On May 4, 2010, the director issued a Request for Evidence (RFE), requesting that the petitioner submit evidence that he and the beneficiary had met in person within the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition or that he qualified for a waiver of that requirement.

In his June 2, 2010 letter submitted in response to the director's RFE, the petitioner stated the following three reasons as to why he could not "get away for more than a day or two": 1) maintaining his rental property; 2) running his [REDACTED] business; and 3) taking care of his household. The petitioner also stated that the beneficiary had applied for a visa to visit him, but it had not yet been approved.

The director denied the petition because the petitioner failed to establish that he and the beneficiary had met, as required under section 214(d) of the Act, or that he qualified for an exemption from this meeting requirement, pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2).

On appeal, the petitioner states that he was unable to personally meet the beneficiary within the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition due to his son's "psychological instability" after the illness and death of his mother, and because of his responsibilities associated with running his own [REDACTED] business and maintaining his rental property. The petitioner also states that the beneficiary had applied for a visa to visit him but she was still awaiting its approval. Taking into account the totality of the circumstances as the petitioner has presented them, the AAO does not find that compliance with the meeting requirement would have resulted in hardship to the petitioner. While his son has suffered a tragic loss, the petitioner did not mention his son's mental

condition in his June 2, 2010 letter as one of the three reasons as to why he was unable to travel. Moreover, the petitioner has not submitted any evidence in support of his assertion that his son's mental health issues would prevent him from traveling, such as a letter from his son's doctor. We also acknowledge the petitioner's financial risks and responsibilities associated with his self-employment and rental property. The financial and time commitments required for travel to a foreign country, however, are common requirements to those filing the Form I-129F petition and do not constitute extreme hardship to the petitioner. In addition, section 214(d) of the Act does not require that the petitioner travel to the beneficiary's home country for the requisite meeting. Although the petitioner asserts that the beneficiary applied for a visa to visit him, the record contains no evidence that the petitioner and the beneficiary explored options for a meeting beyond the petitioner traveling to Ukraine, including, but not limited to, the beneficiary and the petitioner both traveling to a third country. The evidence of record does not establish that the petitioner and the beneficiary met as required. Taking into account the totality of the circumstances as the petitioner has presented them, the AAO does not find that compliance with the meeting requirement would result in extreme hardship to the petitioner. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed. The petition must be denied.

The denial of the petition is without prejudice. Should the petitioner wish to file a new I-129F Petition, the petitioner should consult the instructions to the Form I-129F to understand the specific documents that he should file along with the petition. The petitioner may download the I-129F petition with the instructions from the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov, or he may call the USCIS National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at 1-800-375-5283 to have the form and the instructions mailed to his home.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not met that burden.

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