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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Li

[Redacted]

FILE: [Redacted]
MSC 05 278 12651

Office: LOS ANGELES

Date: **MAR 23 2009**

IN RE: Applicant:

[Redacted]

APPLICATION: Application for Status as a Temporary Resident pursuant to Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

[Redacted]

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. If your appeal was dismissed or rejected, all documents have been returned to the National Benefits Center. You no longer have a case pending before this office, and you are not entitled to file a motion to reopen or reconsider your case. If your appeal was sustained or remanded for further action, you will be contacted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Grissom".

John F. Grissom, Acting Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for temporary resident status pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreements reached in *Catholic Social Services, Inc., et al., v. Ridge, et al.*, CIV. NO. S-86-1343-LKK (E.D. Cal) January 23, 2004, and *Felicity Mary Newman, et al., v. United States Immigration and Citizenship Services, et al.*, CIV. NO. 87-4757-WDK (C.D. Cal) February 17, 2004 (CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements), was denied by the Director, Los Angeles. The decision is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant submitted a Form I-687, Application for Status as a Temporary Resident under Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), and a Form I-687 Supplement, CSS/Newman Class Membership Worksheet. The director determined that the applicant had not established by a preponderance of the evidence that she had continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the duration of the requisite period, and that the evidence submitted by her did not establish her eligibility for the immigration benefit sought. The director denied the application, finding that the applicant had not met her burden of proof and was, therefore, not eligible to adjust to temporary resident status pursuant to the terms of the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements. Specifically, the director noted that the applicant testified under oath during her legalization interview that she entered the United States in 1981, and resided there throughout the requisite period. The director further noted, however, that the applicant failed to provide any evidence to support her eligibility for the legalization program and accordingly denied her claim.

On appeal, counsel submits a brief stating that the director abused her discretion in denying the claim. Counsel states that the applicant's testimony is prima facie evidence of her eligibility and that her application should be approved.

An applicant for temporary resident status must establish entry into the United States before January 1, 1982, and continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since such date and through the date the application is filed. Section 245A(a)(2) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(2). The applicant must also establish that he or she has been continuously physically present in the United States since November 6, 1986. Section 245(a)(3) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(3). The regulations clarify that the applicant must have been physically present in the United States from November 6, 1986 until the date of filing the application. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(b)(1).

For purposes of establishing residence and physical presence under the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements, the term "until the date of filing" in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(b)(1) means until the date the applicant attempted to file a completed Form I-687 application and fee or was caused not to timely file during the original legalization application period of May 5, 1987 to May 4, 1988. CSS Settlement Agreement paragraph 11 at page 6; Newman Settlement Agreement paragraph 11 at page 10.

The applicant has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she has resided in the United States for the requisite period, is admissible to the United States under the provisions of section 245A of the Act, and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status. The inference to be drawn from the documentation provided shall depend on the extent of the documentation, its credibility and

amenability to verification. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(5). To meet his or her burden of proof, an applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from his or her own testimony, and the sufficiency of all evidence produced by the applicant will be judged according to its probative value and credibility. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6).

Although the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3) provides an illustrative list of contemporaneous documents that an applicant may submit in support of his or her claim of continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since prior to January 1, 1982, the submission of any other relevant document is permitted pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(vi)(L).

The “preponderance of the evidence” standard requires that the evidence demonstrate that the applicant's claim is “probably true,” where the determination of “truth” is made based on the factual circumstances of each individual case. *Matter of E-M-*, 20 I&N Dec. 77, 79-80 (Comm. 1989). In evaluating the evidence, *Matter of E-M-* also stated that “[t]ruth is to be determined not by the quantity of evidence alone but by its quality.” *Id.* at 80. Thus, in adjudicating the application pursuant to the preponderance of the evidence standard, the director must examine each piece of evidence for relevance, probative value, and credibility, both individually and within the context of the totality of the evidence, to determine whether the fact to be proven is probably true.

Even if the director has some doubt as to the truth, if the petitioner submits relevant, probative, and credible evidence that leads the director to believe that the claim is “probably true” or “more likely than not,” the applicant or petitioner has satisfied the standard of proof. *See U.S. v. Cardozo-Fonseca*, 480 U.S. 421, 431 (1987) (defining “more likely than not” as a greater than 50 percent probability of something occurring). If the director can articulate a material doubt, it is appropriate for the director to either request additional evidence or, if that doubt leads the director to believe that the claim is probably not true, deny the application or petition.

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant (1) entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and (2) has continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the requisite period of time. The only evidence of record supporting the applicant’s claim are the interview notes of an immigration officer indicating that the applicant testified that she entered the United States without inspection in 1981, and that she remained in this country during the requisite period except for a trip to the Philippines in 1982 lasting approximately six months, and another trip to the Philippines in 1986 which lasted approximately 10 months. The applicant testified that she reentered the United States following both departures without inspection.

As stated previously, the evidence must be evaluated not by the quantity of evidence alone but by its quality. The applicant’s testimony alone is insufficient to establish her claim. In order to meet his or her burden of proof, an applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from his or her own testimony, and the sufficiency of all evidence produced by the applicant will be judged according to its probative value and credibility. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6). The applicant submitted no additional evidence in support of her claim. The claim must, accordingly, be denied.

It should also be noted that the applicant testified before a United States immigration officer that she left the United States during 1982 for a period of approximately 6 months (from May of 1982 – November of 1982), and that she again departed this country in 1986 for approximately 10 months (from the end of January 1986 – approximately December of 1986). The applicant's Form I-687 indicates that the applicant was outside the United States during the requisite period from May of 1982 – August of 1982, from July of 1986 – December of 1986, and from August of 1987 – October of 1987.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(6)(h)(i) states as follows:

(h) *Continuous residence.* (1) For the purpose of this Act, an applicant for *temporary resident status* shall be regarded as having resided continuously in the United States if, at the time of filing of the application:

(i) No single absence from the United States has exceeded forty-five (45) days, and the aggregate of all absences has not exceeded one hundred and eighty (180) days between January 1, 1982 through the date the application for temporary resident status is filed, unless the alien can establish that due to emergent reasons, his or her return to the United States could not be accomplished within the time period allowed;

....

In view of the above regulation, the applicant has failed to establish continuous residence during the requisite period because her absences from the United States in 1982, 1986 and 1987 exceeded, by her own admission, 45 days for a single absence, and 180 days in the aggregate. The testimony given by the applicant during her legalization interview is inconsistent with the information provided on the Form I-687 regarding her absences from the country. It is clear, however, that, considered independently, the absences testified to at the applicant's legalization interview, and the absences listed on the Form I-687, represent an interruption of the applicant's claimed continuous residence during the requisite period under the above cited regulation. Further, the record does not establish that the applicant's return to the United States within the time permitted for "continuous residence" absences could not be accomplished due to emergent reasons. Although the term "emergent reasons" is not defined by regulation, *Matter of C-*, 19 I. & N. Dec. 808 (Comm. 1988), holds that emergent means "coming unexpectedly into being." The "emergent reasons" must be unexpected at the time of departure from the United States and of sufficient magnitude that the applicant's return within the time permitted for continuous residence made returning more than an inconvenience, but practically impossible. The applicant makes no claim of emergent circumstances which precluded her return to the United States subsequent to her voluntary departures. For this additional reason, the application must be denied.

Therefore, based upon the foregoing, the applicant has failed to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that he has continuously resided in an unlawful status in the United States for the requisite

period as required under both 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(5) and *Matter of E- M--*, *supra*. The applicant is, therefore, ineligible for temporary resident status under section 245A of the Act on this basis.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. This decision constitutes a final notice of ineligibility.