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

(b)(6)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Date: NOV 2 7 2013 Office: HOUSTON FILE:

IN RE: Applicant:

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:

INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) in your case. This is a non-precedent decision. The AAO does not announce new constructions of law nor establish agency policy through non-precedent decisions.

Thank you,

for Ron Rosenberg
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The director of the Houston office terminated the temporary resident status of the applicant, pursuant to the terms of the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements, finding the applicant had failed to establish his continuous residence in the United States throughout the requisite period. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be sustained.

On appeal, counsel for the applicant submits a brief. The entire record was reviewed and considered in rendering this decision.[1]

The temporary resident status of an alien may be terminated upon the determination that the alien was ineligible for temporary residence. Section 245A(b)(2)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(b)(2)(A), and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(u)(i).

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 245A(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).

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 periods, 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).

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). To meet his or her burden of proof, an applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from the applicant's 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 "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.* 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

[1] The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. The AAO's *de novo* authority is well recognized by the federal courts. *See Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004).

the evidence, to determine whether the fact to be proven is probably true. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6). The weight to be given any affidavit depends on the totality of the circumstances, and a number of factors must be considered. More weight will be given to an affidavit in which the affiant indicates personal knowledge of the applicant's whereabouts during the time period in question rather than a fill-in-the-blank affidavit that provides generic information. The regulations provide specific guidance on the sufficiency of documentation when proving residence through evidence of past employment or attestations by churches or other organizations. 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.2(d)(3)(i) and (v).

Even if the director has some doubt as to the truth, if the applicant 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 (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. Doubt cast on any aspect of the applicant's proof may lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the remaining evidence offered in support of the application. *Matter of Ho,* 19 I & N Dec. 582, 591-592 (BIA).

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant has established his eligibility for temporary resident status. As stated, the applicant must establish that he (1) entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and (2) has continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status throughout the requisite period. The documentation that the applicant submits in support of his claim to have arrived in the United States before January 1982 and lived in an unlawful status during the requisite period consists of witness statements and employment verification letters. The AAO has reviewed the witness statements and employment verification letters in their entirety to determine the applicant's eligibility.

The record contains two relevant employment verification letters, dated February 4, 1991 and March 11, 1991, respectively. On December 13, 2012, more than twenty years after the letters were signed, the director informed the applicant in a notice of intent to terminate his temporary resident status (NOIT) that the employers had failed to provide evidence that the business was in operation during the statutory period and that the applicant was employed by them. The letters are evidence of the applicant's employment in the United States during the requisite period.

The applicant submitted affidavits from numerous witnesses. In a NOIT, the director gave the affidavits little weight because they were not accompanied by: identity documents from the affiants, proof the affiants were in the United States during the statutory period, documented proof that there was a relationship between the applicant and the affiants and a current phone number for each affiant. The director advised the applicant of these perceived deficiencies more than twenty years after the submission of the evidence. The affidavits are sufficiently detailed to provide credible evidence of the applicant's continuous residence in the United States during the requisite period.

The director based his decision, in part, upon discrepancies between the dates of the applicant's absences from the United States and the dates of his children's birth in Mexico. The record contains typed interview notes that state that the applicant testified that his wife had never visited the United

States. The notes are not contemporaneous and the interviewing officer failed to take a written statement from the applicant; therefore, the notes cannot form the basis for a negative credibility finding in this case.

The discrepancies could easily be attributed to the applicant's literacy level. The record contains evidence that the applicant failed two English tests. The minor discrepancies as to the exact dates of the applicant's absences and the dates of his children's conception and birth registration are insufficient to undermine the evidence in the record to establish the applicant's continuous residence.

An applicant bears the burden of proof of establishing his admissibility and eligibility for temporary resident status. Here, the applicant has met his burden of proof.

ORDER: The appeal is sustained.