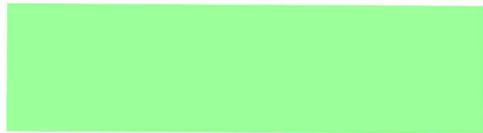


(b)(6)

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



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services



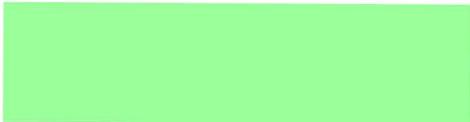
DATE: **OCT 10 2013** OFFICE: NEBRASKA SERVICE CENTER

IN RE: 

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

FILE: 

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Rosenberg".

Ron Rosenberg  
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

cc: Gibbs, Houston, Pauw  
1000 Second Avenue, Suite 1600  
Seattle, WA 98104

**DISCUSSION:** The Nebraska Service Center Director (director) denied the Application for Temporary Resident Status (Form I-687). In a separate action, the director certified its decision to the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) for review. The director's decision will be affirmed. The application will be denied.

On May 4, 1988, the applicant filed an Application for Temporary Resident Status pursuant to Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1225a. The director denied the application, finding the applicant's December 2, 1986 departure pursuant to an order of deportation meant the applicant failed to maintain the required continuous residence. *See* Section 245A(g)(2)(b)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(g)(2)(b)(i).<sup>1</sup>

On May 13, 2013, the director granted the applicant's motion and reopened the Form I-687 temporary resident status application.

This matter has a complex procedural history. In *Proyecto San Pablo v. INS*, No. CIV 89-456-TUC-WDB (D. Ariz. Feb. 2, 2001), the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona held that the legacy Immigration and Nationalization Service (legacy INS) violated the due process rights of a class of applicants for legalization under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) when it denied those applicants access to their complete deportation or exclusion files and prevented them from seeking waivers to "cure" prior deportations or exclusions. On March 27, 2001, the court ordered the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to reopen legalization applications filed by class members and (1) accept waiver applications submitted by class members and adjudicate them in the same manner as waiver applications filed by other legalization applicants were adjudicated; and (2) prior to making a decision on a reopened legalization application, provide the applicant with complete copies of prior deportation files, including copies of tapes and/or transcripts of the hearings before the immigration court, to enable the applicant to bring a collateral challenge to the deportation order, if appropriate. Subsequently, in *Proyecto San Pablo v. Dept of Homeland Security*, No. CV 89-456-TUC-RCC (D. Ariz. May 4, 2007), the court reiterated its March 27, 2001 holding and ruled that, if the entire record cannot be located by the defendants, the following burden of proof will apply:

A legalization applicant who may be denied on the basis of 8 U.S.C. 1225a(g)(2)(B)(i), or because of a prior deportation or exclusion order, must make a *prima facie* showing that the prior deportation or exclusion order was not in compliance with the governing statute or regulations, or occurred in violation of due process, or was otherwise unlawful or involved a gross miscarriage of justice. If the applicant makes such a showing, then CIS has the burden of coming forward with a copy of the tape and/or transcript of the prior deportation or exclusion hearing . . . If

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<sup>1</sup> The section provides that "an alien shall not be considered to have resided continuously in the United States, if, during any period for which continuous residence is required, the alien was outside the United States as a result of a departure under an order of deportation."

CIS does not produce such evidence from the prior deportation or exclusion file, then the prior deportation or exclusion cannot be used as evidence to support a denial of legalization benefits.

Neither counsel nor the applicant responded to the certified denial. However, we note that on March 3, 1996, legacy INS released 35 pages of record material to the applicant pursuant to his Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, number [REDACTED]. Also, on December 31, 1997, legacy INS fulfilled the applicant's subsequent FOIA request, number [REDACTED] and released 39 pages of record material to the applicant. Further, on March 3, 2010, USCIS released record material to the applicant pursuant to a third FOIA request. From the documentary evidence in the record, however, it does not appear that the applicant received a tape recording and/or transcript of his deportation proceeding. The applicant's physical file (currently in the possession of the AAO) does not contain a tape recording or hearing transcript. As a result, USCIS has complied with the District Court's order to the extent that it has provided the applicant with a copy of his legalization file as it currently exists. As a result of the missing transcript and tape recording, however, the applicant's complete file is unavailable.

To invoke a shift in the burden of proof from the applicant to USCIS, the applicant must make a *prima facie* showing that his deportation order was either: the result of proceedings not in compliance with the governing law or regulations; or occurred in violation of due process; or was otherwise unlawful or involved a gross miscarriage of justice.

In this case, the director granted the applicant's motion and reopened the applicant's Form I-687 temporary resident status application. However, the director found the applicant failed to satisfy the continuous residence requirement of section 245A(a)(2)(A) of the Act. The director further found the applicant ineligible for temporary resident status under sections 245A(a)(4)(B) and 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) for having been convicted of assault in the first degree, a felony in violation of section 18-3-202(2)(A) of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The director therefore denied the Form I-687 application and certified the matter to the AAO for a ruling. In rendering a decision, the director did not address whether the applicant was provided with a complete copy of his deportation file nor did the director discuss whether the applicant submitted *prima facie* evidence that his deportation order was not in compliance with the governing statute or regulations, or occurred in violation of due process, or resulted in a gross miscarriage of justice, as required by the amended *Proyecto* order.

The standard for establishing a *prima facie* case means the evidence reveals a reasonable likelihood that requirements have been satisfied. *See Fernandez v. Gonzales*, 439 F.3d 592, n.6 (9th Cir. 2006) (citing *Ordonez v. INS*, 345 F.3d 777, 785 (9th Cir.2003) (citations omitted)). A reasonable likelihood means showing a realistic chance that the petitioner can establish the issue in question at a later time. *Guo v. Ashcroft*, 386 F.3d 556, 564 (3rd Cir. 2004) (discussing the *prima facie* standard in the context of motions to reopen).

In applying these standards, the Board of Immigration Appeals (Board) and most Circuits employ a balancing test and weigh all evidence for and against in determining whether a *prima facie* case has been made. See *Zheng v. Mukasey*, 546 F.3d 70, 72 (1st Cir. 2008) (discussing the issue in the context of a motion to reopen); *Wang v. BIA*, 437 F.3d 270, 276 (2d Cir. 2006) (same); *Matter of J-W-S-*, 24 I&N Dec. 185, 191-92; *Matter of C-C*, 23 I&N Dec. 899, 902-03 (BIA 2006) (same); *Guo v. Ashcroft*, 386 F.3d 556, 564-66 (3rd Cir. 2004) (same).

In relevant part, under the terms of the *Proyecto* amended order, counsel has requested a copy of the applicant's complete deportation file, including the tape recording and/or transcript of his client's deportation hearing. The relevant regulation in existence at the time of the applicant's deportation hearing, 8 C.F.R. § 242.15, indicated that "[t]he hearing shall be recorded verbatim except for statements made off the record with the permission of the special inquiry officer." It is likely that the hearing was recorded, and possible that it was included among other hearings on one tape (as we understand was frequently the case); however, EOIR and USCIS searches have not produced a copy of the recording. On March 3, 1996, legacy INS released 35 pages of record material to the applicant. Also, on December 31, 1997, legacy INS released 39 pages of record material to the applicant. Furthermore, on March 3, 2010, USCIS released record material to the applicant pursuant to a third FOIA request. However, the current entire USCIS record, which is before the AAO, does not contain a tape recording or transcript. Therefore, it appears that USCIS and EOIR have fully complied with the court's order to provide the applicant with all available records relating to his deportation proceedings. While the applicant does not appear to be statutorily eligible for legalization without the special rules of construction set out by the court in the *Proyecto* amended order, and the outstanding deportation order appears valid under current ninth circuit case law (and has apparently never been challenged to EOIR or to the Court of Appeals), we are obliged to follow, to the letter, the 2007 amended *Proyecto* order.

We therefore find the evidence sufficient to determine that the applicant has made a *prima facie* showing that the proceedings which resulted in his deportation were not in compliance with the governing regulations as there is no evidence that the immigration court maintained a tape recording of the applicant's deportation hearing. As a result, USCIS cannot use the prior deportation order as evidence to support a denial of legalization benefits. Consequently, pursuant to the terms of the 2007 amended *Proyecto* order the AAO is constrained to find that the applicant has overcome the particular basis of the denial cited by the director.

An applicant for temporary residence 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 245(a)(2) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(2). An alien shall not be considered to have resided continuously in the United States if, during any period for which continuous residence is required, the alien was outside the United States under an order of deportation. Section 245A(g)(2)(B)(i), 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(g)(2)(B)(i).

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 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).

An alien who applies for temporary resident status must also establish that he or she is admissible to the United States as an immigrant, and has not been convicted of any felony, or three or more misdemeanors. Section 245A(a)(4)(B) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(4)(B). In addition, an applicant for temporary resident status must establish that he or she is not ineligible for admission under one or more of the categories listed in the Act. Section 245A(a)(4)(A), 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(4)(A).

“Misdemeanor” means a crime committed in the United States, either (1) punishable by imprisonment for a term of one year or less, regardless of the term actually served, if any; or (2) a crime treated as a misdemeanor under 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(p). For purposes of this definition, any crime punishable by imprisonment for a maximum term of five days or less shall not be considered a misdemeanor. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(o).

“Felony” means a crime committed in the United States punishable by imprisonment for a term of more than one year, regardless of the term actually served, if any. There is an exception when the offense is defined by the state as a misdemeanor and the sentence actually imposed is one year or less, regardless of the term actually served. Under this exception, for purposes of 8 C.F.R. § 245a, the crime shall be treated as a misdemeanor. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(p).

In addition, an applicant is inadmissible, and therefore ineligible for temporary resident status, if he has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude (other than a purely political offense), or if he admits having committed such crime, or if he admits committing an act which constitutes the essential elements of such crime. Section 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), as amended, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(2)(A)(i)(I).

An issue to be determined in this proceeding is whether the applicant has furnished sufficient credible evidence that he has no disqualifying criminal convictions, and is thus otherwise admissible to the United States. A review of the record reveals that the applicant has failed to meet this burden due to his felony criminal conviction for a crime involving moral turpitude.

Section 212(a)(2)(A) of the Act provides, in pertinent part:

- (i) [A]ny alien convicted of, or who admits having committed, or who admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of –

(I) a crime involving moral turpitude (other than a purely political offense) or an attempt or conspiracy to commit such a crime . . . is inadmissible.

In *Matter of Silva-Trevino*, 24 I&N Dec. 687 (A.G. 2008), the Attorney General articulated a new methodology for determining whether a conviction is a crime involving moral turpitude where the language of the criminal statute in question encompasses conduct involving moral turpitude and conduct that does not. First, in evaluating whether an offense is one that categorically involves moral turpitude, an adjudicator reviews the criminal statute at issue to determine if there is a “realistic probability, not a theoretical possibility,” that the statute would be applied to reach conduct that does not involve moral turpitude. *Id.* at 698 (citing *Gonzalez v. Duenas-Alvarez*, 549 U.S. 183, 193 (2007)). A realistic probability exists where, at the time of the proceeding, an “actual (as opposed to hypothetical) case exists in which the relevant criminal statute was applied to conduct that did not involve moral turpitude. If the statute has not been so applied in any case (including the alien’s own case), the adjudicator can reasonably conclude that all convictions under the statute may categorically be treated as ones involving moral turpitude.” *Id.* at 697, 708 (citing *Duenas-Alvarez*, 549 U.S. at 193).

However, if a case exists in which the criminal statute in question was applied to conduct that does not involve moral turpitude, “the adjudicator cannot categorically treat all convictions under that statute as convictions for crimes that involve moral turpitude.” 24 I&N Dec. at 697 (citing *Duenas-Alvarez*, 549 U.S. at 185-88, 193). An adjudicator then engages in a second-stage inquiry in which the adjudicator reviews the “record of conviction” to determine if the conviction was based on conduct involving moral turpitude. *Id.* at 698-699, 703-704, 708. The record of conviction consists of documents such as the indictment, the judgment of conviction, jury instructions, a signed guilty plea, and the plea transcript. *Id.* at 698, 704, 708.

If review of the record of conviction is inconclusive, an adjudicator then considers any additional evidence deemed necessary or appropriate to resolve accurately the moral turpitude question. 24 I&N Dec. at 699-704, 708-709. However, this “does not mean that the parties would be free to present any and all evidence bearing on an alien’s conduct leading to the conviction. (citation omitted). The sole purpose of the inquiry is to ascertain the nature of the prior conviction; it is not an invitation to relitigate the conviction itself.” *Id.* at 703.

The record reflects that on November 1, 1985, the applicant was convicted in the [REDACTED] District Court in Colorado, for the offense of assault in the first degree, a class five felony in violation of section 18-3-202(2)(A) of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The maximum possible penalty for this offense at the time of the applicant’s conviction was between two to four years imprisonment. In this case, the record of conviction reflects that the applicant was sentenced to probation for a period of two years and was ordered to pay a victim compensation fee and court costs.

At the time of the applicant's conviction, section 18-3-202(2)(A) provided that:

If assault in the first degree is committed under circumstances where the act causing the injury is performed, not after deliberation, upon a sudden heat of passion, caused by a serious and highly provoking act of the intended victim, affecting the person causing the injury sufficiently to excite an irresistible passion in a reasonable person, it is a class 5 felony.

As a general rule, simple assault or battery is not deemed to involve moral turpitude for purposes of the immigration laws. *Matter of Fualaau*, 21 I&N Dec. 475, 477 (BIA 1996). However, this general rule does not apply where an assault or battery necessarily involved some aggravating dimension, such as the use of a deadly weapon or the infliction of bodily injury. *See, e.g., Matter of Danesh*, 19 I&N Dec. 669 (BIA 1988), *Matter of Goodalle*, 12 I&N Dec. 106 (BIA 1967), *Matter of S-*, 5 I&N Dec. 668 (BIA 1954), and *Nguyen v. Reno*, 211 F.3d 692 (1st Cir. 2000). Based on the statutory language, we find that section 18-3-202(2)(A) encompasses conduct that involves moral turpitude as it requires proof of the infliction of bodily injury upon another person. As such, we agree with the director's assessment that the applicant's conviction for first degree assault, which requires the causation of serious bodily injury to a person, is a crime involving moral turpitude. Furthermore, we note that the applicant does not dispute that his conviction constitutes a crime involving moral turpitude.

Therefore, based on the record, we affirm that the applicant's conviction for first degree assault is a crime involving moral turpitude, rendering him inadmissible under section 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(2)(A)(i)(I). As the maximum possible penalty for this class 5 felony is two to four years imprisonment, the applicant is ineligible for the petty offense exception set forth in section 212(a)(2)(A)(II) of the Act. Furthermore, the applicant's assault in the first degree conviction in violation of section 18-3-202 of the Colorado Revised Statutes constitutes a "felony" under the standards set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(p).

In light of the applicant's conviction for felony assault in the first degree, the applicant is not eligible for temporary resident status on account of his conviction for a crime involving moral turpitude, which renders him inadmissible to the United States. Section 245(a)(4)(A) of the Act. No waiver of such ineligibility is available. Additionally, as the applicant has been convicted of a felony for which the maximum possible penalty is two to four years imprisonment, he is ineligible for temporary resident status pursuant to section 245A(a)(4)(B) of the Act. *See also* 8 C.F.R. § 245a.11(d)(1). There is no waiver available to an applicant convicted of one felony or three or more misdemeanors committed in the United States. Therefore, based on the foregoing, the applicant is ineligible for temporary resident status under section 245A of the Act and the AAO

will not disturb the decision of the director denying the applicant's temporary resident status application.<sup>2</sup>

In application proceedings, it is the applicant's burden to establish eligibility for the immigration benefit sought. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, that burden has not been met.

**ORDER:** The director's May 13, 2013 decision is affirmed. The Form I-687 application remains denied.

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<sup>2</sup> The record evidence further reflects that on January 21, 1985, the applicant falsely claimed U.S. citizenship to obtain unemployment insurance benefits in the state of Colorado. As the false claim was made prior to the enactment of Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), it is treated as misrepresentation under section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Act and the alien is eligible to apply for a waiver. *See Memorandum by Lori Scialabba, Associate Director, RAIO, Donald Neufeld, Associate Director, Domestic Operations Directorate, Pearl Chang, Acting Chief, Policy and Strategy, dated March 3, 2009.* However, further consideration of this ground of inadmissibility is unnecessary, as the applicant has not filed a Form I-690 waiver application and he remains ineligible for temporary resident status under sections 245A(a)(4)(B) and 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) of the Act.