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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Administrative Appeals MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529-2090

U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

L2

[Redacted]

FILE:

[Redacted]

Office: MIAMI

Date:

JUN 17 2009

MSC-01-285-60037

IN RE:

Applicant: [Redacted]

APPLICATION:

Application for Status as a Permanent Resident pursuant to Section 1104 of the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-553, 114 Stat. 2762 (2000), amended by LIFE Act Amendments, Pub. L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763 (2000).

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.


John F. Grissom

Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for permanent resident status under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act was denied by the Director, Miami, and is before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal.

The director determined that the applicant had not established by a preponderance of the evidence that he had continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the duration of the requisite period. Specifically, the director noted that the applicant was admitted to the United States in B-2 visitor status for the first time in March of 1981. The director noted that the applicant testified in his October 24, 2006 interview with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that he made multiple trips in and out of the United States until November 1981. The director noted that the applicant's visa was valid for multiple entries. The director concluded that the applicant was likely in valid nonimmigrant status prior to January 1, 1982 and therefore not eligible for the benefit sought. Accordingly, since the applicant was in the United States in lawful status during the relevant period, the director denied the LIFE Act application on June 6, 2006.

On appeal, the applicant asserts that United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) erred in finding that the applicant failed to prove that he was in unlawful status in the United States prior to January 1, 1982 in a manner known to the government. He asserts that he violated his lawful B-2 status by working without employment authorization prior to January 1, 1982. He does not assert, however, that his unlawful status was in any way known to the government prior to January 1, 1982.

On September 9, 2008 the court approved a Stipulation of Settlement in the class action *Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, et al vs. USCIS, et al*, 88-CV-00379 JLR (W.D. Was.) (NWIRP). Class members are defined, in relevant part, as:

1. Class Members [include] all persons who entered the United States in a nonimmigrant status prior to January 1, 1982, who are otherwise *prima facie* eligible for legalization under § 245A of the INA [Immigration & Nationality Act], 8 U.S.C. § 1255a, who are within one or more of the Enumerated Categories described below in paragraph 2, and who –

(A) between May 5, 1987 and May 4, 1988, attempted to file a complete application for legalization under § 245A of the INA and fees to an INS officer or agent acting on behalf of the INS, including a Qualified Designated Agency (“QDE”), and whose applications were rejected for filing (hereinafter referred to as ‘Subclass A members’); or

(B) between May 5, 1987 and May 4, 1988, attempted to apply for legalization with an INS officer, or agent acting on behalf of the INS, including a QDE, under § 245A of the INA, but were advised that they were ineligible for legalization, or were refused legalization application forms, and for whom such information, or inability to obtain the required application forms, was a substantial cause of their failure to file or complete a timely written application (hereinafter referred to as ‘Sub-class B’ members); or

(C) filed a legalization application under INA § 245A and fees with an INS officer or agent acting on behalf of the INS, including a QDE, and whose application

- i. has not been finally adjudicated or whose temporary resident status has been proposed for termination (hereinafter referred to as 'Sub-class C.i. members'),
- ii. was denied or whose temporary resident status was terminated, where the INS or CIS action or inaction was because INS or CIS believed the applicant had failed to meet the 'known to the government' requirement, or the requirement that s/he demonstrate that his/her unlawful residence was continuous (hereinafter referred to as 'Sub-class C.ii members').

2. Enumerated Categories

- (1) Persons who violated the terms of their nonimmigrant status prior to January 1, 1982 in a manner known to the government because documentation or the absence thereof (including, but not limited to, the absence of quarterly or annual address reports required on or before December 31, 1981) existed in the records of one or more government agencies which, taken as a whole, warrants a finding that the applicant was in an unlawful status prior to January 1, 1982, in a manner known to the government.
- (2) Persons who violated the terms of their nonimmigrant visas before January 1, 1982, for whom INS/DHS records for the relevant period (including required school and employer reports of status violations) are not contained in the alien's A-file, and who are unable to meet the requirements of 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.1(d) and 245a.2(d) without such records.
- (3) Persons whose facially valid 'lawful status' on or after January 1, 1982 was obtained by fraud or mistake, whether such 'lawful status' was the result of
 - a. reinstatement to nonimmigrant status;
 - b. **change of nonimmigrant status pursuant to INA § 248;**
 - c. adjustment of status pursuant to INA § 245; or
 - d. grant of some other immigration benefit deemed to interrupt the continuous unlawful residence or continuous physical presence requirements of INA § 245A.

The AAO finds that the applicant is a member of the NWIRP class as enumerated above and will adjudicate the application in accordance with the standards set forth in the settlement agreement.

NWIRP provides that I-485 applications pending as of the date of the agreement shall be adjudicated in accordance with the adjudication standards described in paragraph 8B of the settlement agreement. Under those standards, the applicant must make a *prima facie* showing that prior to January 1, 1982, the applicant violated the terms of his or her nonimmigrant status in a manner known to the government because documentation or the absence thereof (including, but not limited to, the absence of quarterly or annual address reports required on or before December 31, 1981) existed in the records of one or more government agencies which, taken as a whole, warrants a finding that the applicant was in an unlawful status prior to January 1, 1982, in a manner known to

the government. It is presumed that the school or employer complied with the law and reported violations of status to the INS; the absence of such report in government records is not alone sufficient to rebut this presumption. Once the applicant makes such a showing, USCIS then has the burden of coming forward with proof to rebut the evidence that the applicant violated his or her status. If USCIS fails to carry this burden, the settlement agreement stipulates at paragraph 8B that it will be found that the alien's unlawful status was known to the government as of January 1, 1982. With respect to individuals who obtained their status by fraud or mistake, the applicant bears the burden of establishing that he or she obtained lawful status by fraud or mistake. The settlement agreement further stipulates that the general adjudicatory standards set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.18(d) or 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(k)(4), whichever is more favorable to the applicant, shall be followed to adjudicate the merits of the application once class membership is favorably determined.

An applicant for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act 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 through May 4, 1988. See § 1104(c)(2)(B) of the LIFE Act and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.11(b).

An applicant for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act has the burden to establish 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 and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status under this section. 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.12(e).

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 states 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 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 (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.

Although the regulations provide an illustrative list of contemporaneous documents that an applicant may submit, the list also permits the submission of affidavits and any other relevant document. See 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(vi)(L).

In support of his claim of continuous unlawful residence in the United States, the applicant asserts that he was employed while in B-2 status. A review of the record reveals that the applicant testified

at his October 24, 2006 interview with USCIS that he was admitted to the United States in B-2 visitor status multiple times between March 1981 and November 1981. He asserts that he violated his B-2 status by accepting unauthorized employment prior to January 1, 1982. He also asserts that he “overstayed” his B-2 status following his November 1981 entry, however, since this overstay did not occur prior to January 1, 1982 it is not relevant to whether the applicant violated his lawful status prior to January 1, 1982.

Following *de novo* review of the record of proceedings, the AAO finds insufficient evidence submitted which supports the applicant’s assertion that he worked without authorization prior to January 1, 1982. In support of his application, the applicant submits only two affidavits.

The first affiant, [REDACTED], indicates that she met the applicant in February 1981 when they met at Sunrise Flea Market. The 1981 date appears to have been altered on her affidavit. She asserts that the applicant shared an apartment with a friend of her brother, [REDACTED]. She also asserts that the applicant worked as a helper, selling tee shirts at the flea market with [REDACTED] until March 1986 when he moved to Plantation, Florida and began working for Trade Bindry. She does not indicate how frequently she saw the applicant, how she dates her initial acquaintance with him, or any other relevant details.

The second affiant, [REDACTED], indicates that the applicant lived with him at [REDACTED] Oakland Park, Florida from March 1981 until February 1986. He also asserts that the applicant departed the United States to see his sick father in October 1982, returning in November 1982. Mr. [REDACTED] also fails to indicate how frequently he saw the applicant, how he dates his initial acquaintance with him, or any other relevant details. He also fails to submit any evidence he lived with the applicant for five years, such as a lease agreement, rental receipts, or utility bills.

Since the affidavits submitted lack sufficient detail to be considered credible and probative of the applicant’s unauthorized employment, the applicant has not established that he worked without authorization prior to January 1, 1982. Therefore, his status was not considered unlawful based upon this grounds asserted, through counsel, on appeal. Furthermore, even if he had established that he worked without authorization, the applicant does not assert that this violation was known to the government prior to January 1, 1982 as required by the NWIRP Settlement Agreement.

However, the AAO maintains plenary power to review each appeal on a *de novo* basis. 5 U.S.C. § 557(b) (“On appeal from or review of the initial decision, the agency has all the powers which it would have in making the initial decision except as it may limit the issues on notice or by rule.”); *see also, Janka v. U.S. Dept. of Transp., NTSB*, 925 F.2d 1147, 1149 (9th Cir. 1991). The AAO’s *de novo* authority has been long recognized by the federal courts. *See, e.g. Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2d Cir. 1989). In this case, the AAO finds that the applicant violated his status by failing to submit quarterly address reports pursuant to Section 265 of the INA.

Until Dec. 29, 1981, section 265 of the Act stated that any alien in the United States in “lawful temporary residence status shall” notify the Attorney General “in writing of his address at the expiration of each three-month period during which he remains in the United States, regardless of whether there has been any change in address.” *See* attached section 265 of the Act (1980) and PL 97-116, 1981 HR 4327(1981) which confirms that section 265 was modified, effective December 29,

1981, such that lawful non-immigrants were no longer required to file quarterly address reports regardless of whether there had been any change in address.

The applicant asserts that entered the United States using his B-2 visa in March 1981. He would have been required to provide written updates of his address at the expiration of each three-month period during which he remained in the United States, regardless of whether there was any change in address, for the period March 1981 until December 31, 1981. The record of proceedings is void of any address updates.

Following *de novo* review by the AAO, USCIS records do not reflect that the applicant filed quarterly or annual address notifications as required prior to December 31, 1981. In accordance with the terms of NWIRP, the AAO finds that the evidence establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that the applicant was unlawfully present in a manner known to the government prior to January 1, 1982. Consequently, the applicant has overcome the grounds for denial cited by the director and has established that his unlawful status was known to the government prior to January 1, 1982.

However, as noted above, the application cannot be approved because the applicant has failed to establish his continuous residence for the duration of the requisite period. As noted above, the affidavits submitted by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] lack sufficient detail to be considered probative.

Applying the adjudicatory standards set forth in the settlement agreement, the AAO finds that the applicant did not violate the terms of his nonimmigrant status in a manner known to the government prior to January 1, 1982 by working without authorization. However, his failure to submit quarterly address reports pursuant to Section 265 of the INA was a violation of his B-2 status that was known to the government prior to January 1, 1982. Finally, even if his unlawful status was known to the government prior to January 1, 1982, he has failed to establish that he continuously resided in the United States for the duration of the requisite period.

Furthermore, the application may not be approved, however, as the evidence establishes that the applicant is inadmissible to the United States. Section 245A(a)(4)(A) of the Immigration & Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(4)(A), requires an alien to establish that he or she is admissible to the United States as an immigrant in order to be eligible for temporary resident status.

The record reflects that the applicant sought through misrepresentation to procure an immigration benefit under the Act. As noted above, the applicant entered the United States multiple times using a B-2 visitor visa. During his November 1981 entry, he did not disclose that he had violated the terms of his visa by establishing residence in the United States. He also did not disclose his immigrant intent upon entering in B-2 status in November 1981. This was in violation of Section 214(b) of the Act.

An alien is inadmissible if he seeks through fraud or misrepresentation to procure an immigration benefit under the Act. Section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(C)(i). Thus, the applicant is inadmissible and ineligible for legalization benefits.

Pursuant to section 245A(d)(2)(B)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(d)(2)(B)(i), the cited grounds of inadmissibility may be waived in the case of individual aliens for humanitarian purposes, to assure

family unity, or when it is otherwise in the public interest. The AAO notes that the applicant has filed a Form I-690 Application for Waiver of Grounds of Excludability relating to the misrepresentation. As the waiver application has not been adjudicated, the applicant is not admissible and is ineligible for legalization benefits. Furthermore, even if the waiver were approved, the application would not be approvable since the applicant failed to establish his continuous residence for the duration of the relevant period. Accordingly, the applicant's appeal will be dismissed.

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