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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



FILE: [REDACTED]
MSC 02 227 60515

Office: LOS ANGELES

Date: **AUG 23 2010**

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:



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.



Attest: [Signature] and [Signature]
[Signature] [Signature]
[Signature] [Signature]
[Signature] [Signature]

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

The director denied the application because the applicant had not demonstrated that he had continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status since before January 1, 1982 through May 4, 1988 as required by section 1104(c)(2)(B) of the LIFE Act.

On appeal, counsel reiterated the applicant's claim of residence in this country for the requisite period and asserted that the applicant had submitted sufficient evidence in support of such claim. Counsel requested a copy of the record of proceedings and indicates a brief would be forthcoming within thirty days of compliance with this request.

The record shows that United States and Citizenship and Immigration Services or USCIS (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service or the Service) complied with counsel's request with Control Number [REDACTED] and mailed a copy of the record to counsel on November 10, 2009. The brief subsequently submitted by counsel has been incorporated into the applicant's appeal.

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

The applicant 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 under the provisions of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), 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).

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 to May 4, 1988, the submission of any other relevant document including affidavits 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. *Id.*

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.

At issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant has submitted sufficient credible evidence to meet his burden of establishing continuous unlawful residence in the United States during the requisite period. Here, the applicant has failed to meet this burden.

The applicant made a claim to class membership in a legalization class-action lawsuit and as such, was permitted to file a Form I-687, Application for Temporary Resident Status Pursuant to Section 245A of the Act, on December 1, 1993. Subsequently, the applicant filed his Form I-485 LIFE Act application on May 15, 2002.

In support of his claim of residence in the United States for the requisite period, the applicant submitted an affidavit of residence, original and photocopied paycheck stubs, original and photocopied receipts for registered mail, photocopied retail receipts, photocopied receipts for money orders, and photocopied envelopes.

The director determined that the applicant failed to submit sufficient credible evidence demonstrating his residence in the United States in an unlawful status during the period in question and, therefore, denied the Form I-485 LIFE Act application on October 25, 2006.

Counsel’s remarks on appeal relating to the sufficiency of the evidence submitted by the applicant in support of his claim of continuous residence are noted. However, during the adjudication of the applicant’s appeal, information came to light that adversely affects the applicant’s overall credibility as well as the credibility of his claim of residence in this country from prior to January 1, 1982 to May 4, 1988. As has been previously discussed, the applicant submitted supporting documentation including photocopied envelopes. Although three of these photocopied envelopes contain indiscernible postmarks, the remaining photocopied envelopes are postmarked January 7, 1982, June 9, 1983, August 17, 1984, August 17, 1985, the twentieth day of an indeterminate month in 1986, and March 26 of an indeterminate year. The envelopes bear Mexican postage stamps and were presented as having been mailed from Mexico to the applicant at the sole address in this country that he claimed to have resided for the entire period in question. A review of the *2010 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* Volume 4 (Scott



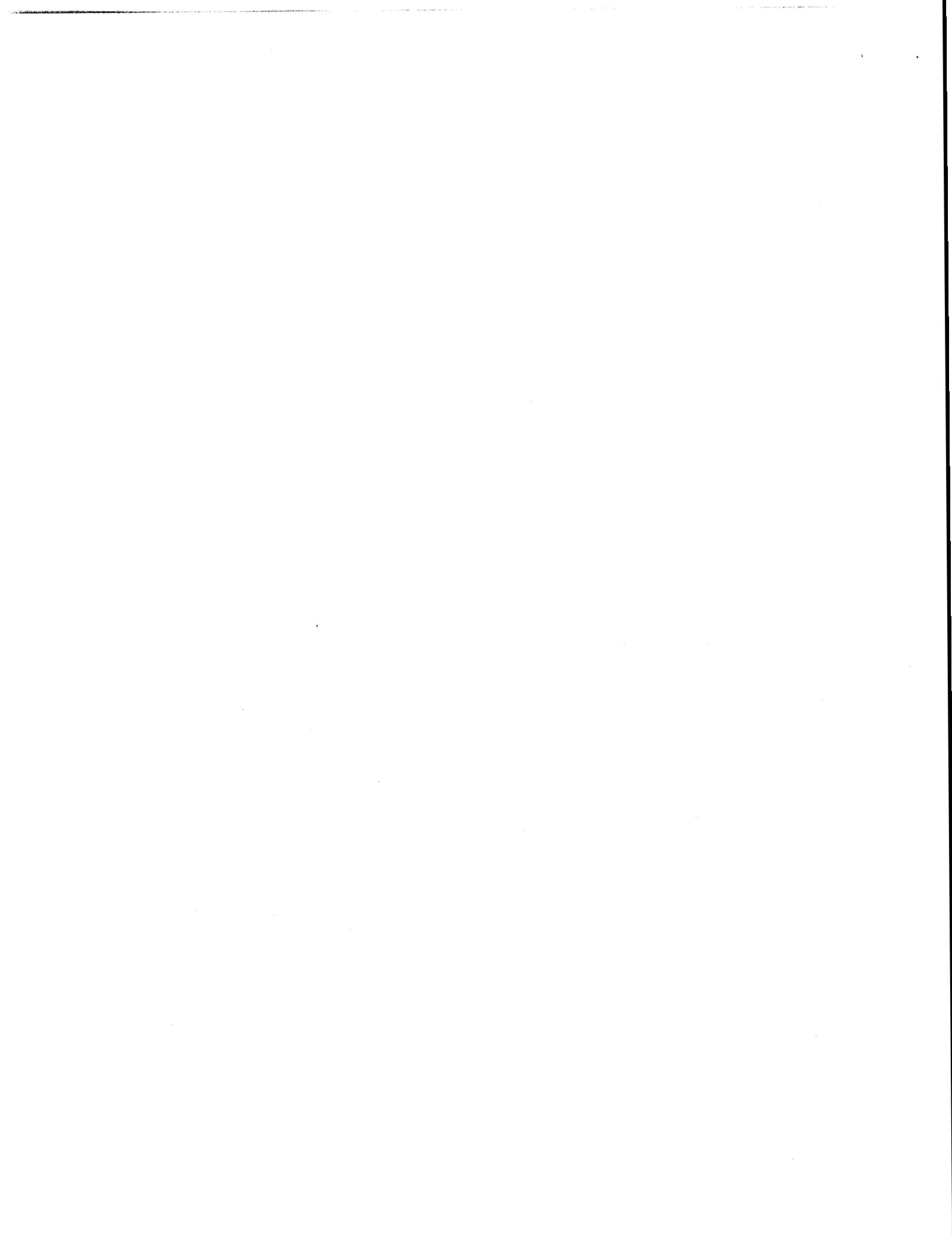
Publishing Company 2009), reveals the following regarding the Mexican postage stamps affixed to the envelopes:

- The photocopied envelopes postmarked January 7, 1982 and June 9, 1983 both bear a stamp with a value of forty pesos. This stamp contains a stylized illustration of four books stacked on each other titled in Spanish from top to bottom “libros” (books), “ciencia” (science), “arte” (art), and “letras” (letters) and the notation “Mexico Exporta” encircling an eagle’s head in the right hand corner. A review of Volume 4 of the *2010 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* reveals that this stamp was issued in two different versions. The first version of this stamp is colored orange brown and light yellow and is listed at page 942 of Volume 4 of the *2010 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* as catalogue number 1131 A320. The catalogue lists the date of issue for this version of the stamp as 1984. The second version of this stamp is colored pale green and gold and is listed at page 951 of Volume 4 of the *2010 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* as catalogue number 1466 A320. The catalogue lists the date of issue for this version of the stamp as 1986.

The fact that photocopied envelopes postmarked January 7, 1982 and June 9, 1983 both bear a postage stamp that was not issued until well after the date of these postmarks establishes that the applicant utilized these documents in a fraudulent manner and made material misrepresentations in an attempt to establish his residence within the United States for the requisite period. This derogatory information establishes that the applicant made material misrepresentations in asserting his claim of residence in the United States for the period in question and thus casts doubt on his eligibility for adjustment to permanent residence under the provisions of the LIFE Act. By engaging in such an action, the applicant has negated his own credibility, the credibility of his claim of continuous residence in this country for the requisite period, and the credibility of all documentation submitted in support of such claim.

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 visa petition. It is incumbent upon the applicant to resolve any inconsistencies in the record by independent objective evidence, and attempts to explain or reconcile such inconsistencies, absent competent objective evidence pointing to where the truth, in fact, lies, will not suffice. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I&N Dec. 582, 591-92 (BIA 1988).

The AAO issued a notice to the applicant and counsel on July 7, 2010 informing the parties that it was the AAO’s intent to affirm the director’s certified decision and dismiss the applicant’s appeal based upon the fact that the applicant utilized the postmarked envelopes cited above in a fraudulent manner and made material misrepresentations in an attempt to establish his residence within the United States for the requisite period. The parties were granted fifteen days to provide evidence to overcome, fully and persuasively, these findings.



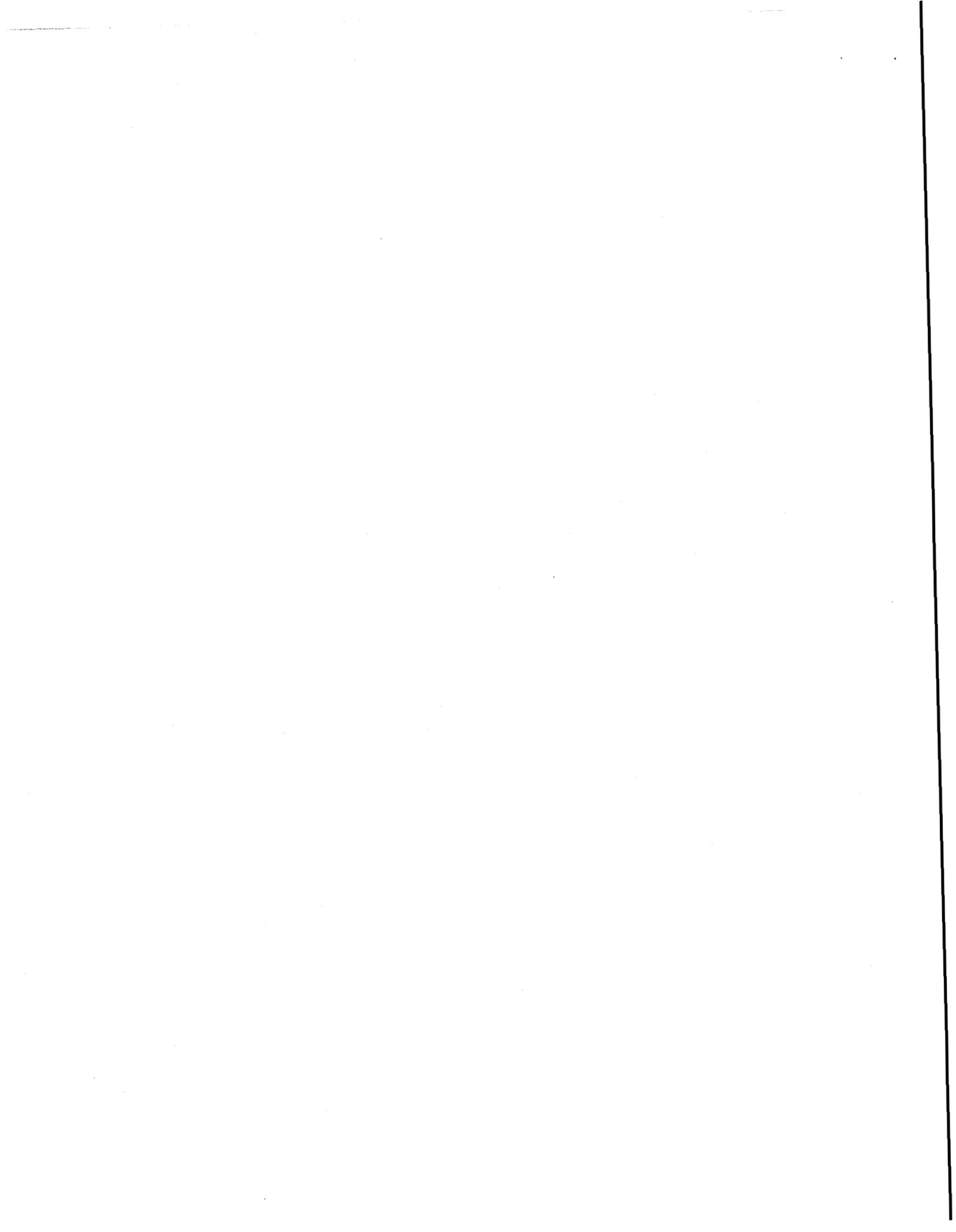
In response, counsel submits a statement in which he claims that the applicant provided original envelopes rather than photocopies to the Service at his initial interview on December 1, 1993, and that such original envelopes should still be in the record. However, a review of the record reveals that the only original documents submitted by the applicant on this date were two original paycheck stubs and three receipts for registered mail. The remaining supporting documents submitted by the applicant on December 1, 1993 were all photocopies rather than original documents.

Counsel asserts that the AAO did not have the authority to issue a notice of intent to dismiss the applicant's appeal, but rather should return the case to the director for further adjudication and a new decision pursuant to the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(16)(i). Nevertheless, counsel's argument is without merit as the AAO maintains plenary power to review this matter 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 federal courts have long recognized the AAO's *de novo* review authority. *See*, e.g. *Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2d Cir. 1989). In addition, an application or petition that fails to comply with the technical requirements of the law may be denied by the AAO even if the Service Center [or other office] does not identify all of the grounds for denial in the initial decision. *See Spencer Enterprises, Inc. v. United States*, 229 F. Supp. 2d 1025, 1043 (E.D. Cal. 2001), *aff'd*, 345 F.3d 683 (9th Cir. 2003); *see also Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004) (noting that the AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis). Finally, the pertinent regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(16) states the following:

Inspection of evidence. An applicant or petitioner shall be permitted to inspect the record of proceeding which constitutes the basis for the decision, except as provided in the following paragraphs.

(i) Derogatory information unknown to petitioner or applicant. If the decision will be adverse to the applicant or petitioner and is based on derogatory information considered by the Service and of which the applicant or petitioner is unaware, he/she shall be advised of this fact and offered an opportunity to rebut the information and present information in his/her own behalf before the decision is rendered, except as provided in paragraphs (b)(16)(ii), (iii), and (iv) of this section. Any explanation, rebuttal, or information presented by or in behalf of the applicant or petitioner shall be included in the record of proceeding.

(ii) Determination of statutory eligibility. A determination of statutory eligibility shall be based only on information contained in the record of proceeding which is disclosed to the applicant or



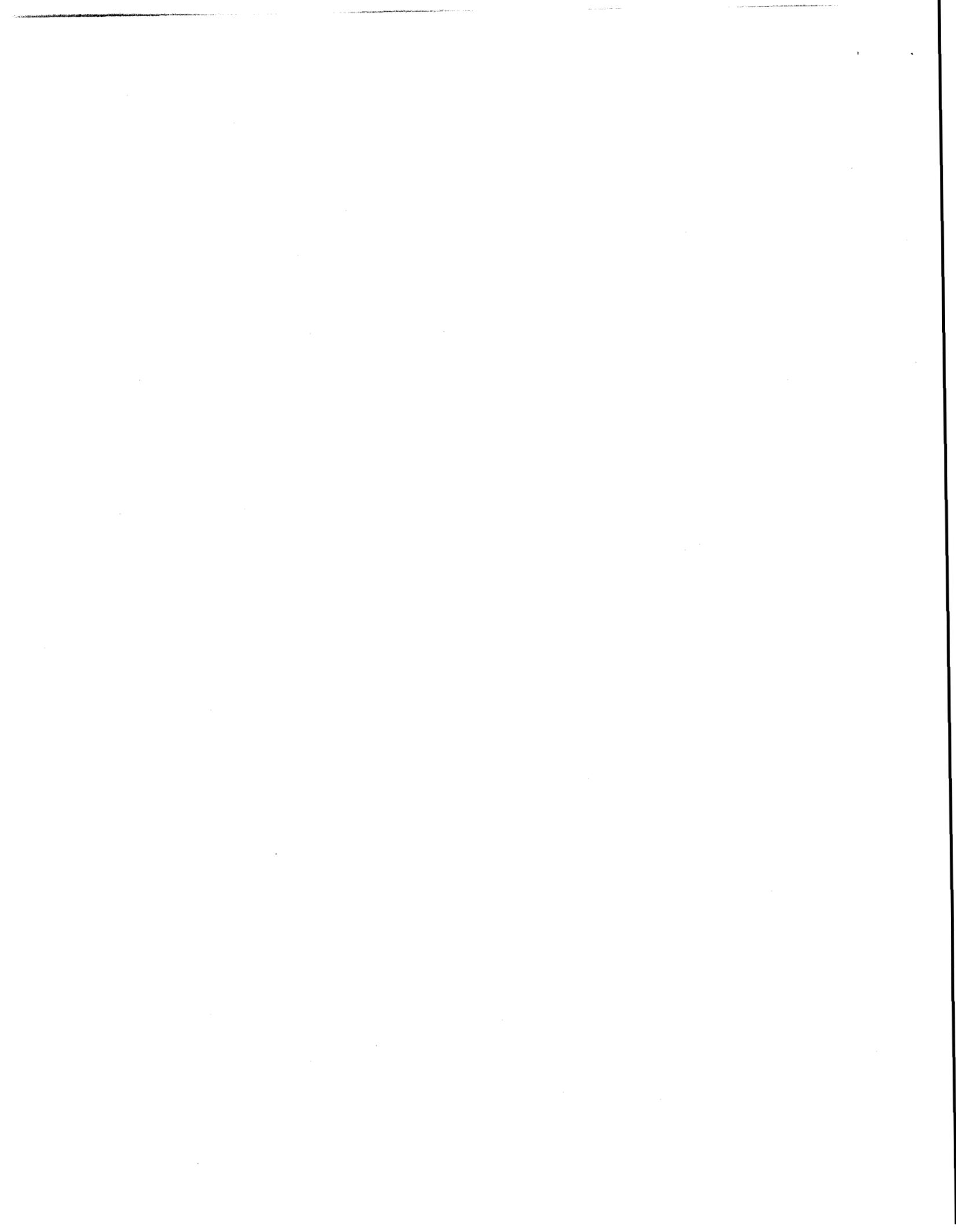
petitioner, except as provided in paragraph (b)(16)(iv) of this section.

(iii) Discretionary determination. Where an application may be granted or denied in the exercise of discretion, the decision to exercise discretion favorably or unfavorably may be based in whole or in part on classified information not contained in the record and not made available to the applicant, provided the regional commissioner has determined that such information is relevant and is classified under Executive Order No. 12356 (47 FR 14874; April 6, 1982) as requiring protection from unauthorized disclosure in the interest of national security.

(iv) Classified information. An applicant or petitioner shall not be provided any information contained in the record or outside the record which is classified under Executive Order No. 12356 (47 FR 14874; April 6, 1982) as requiring protection from unauthorized disclosure in the interest of national security, unless the classifying authority has agreed in writing to such disclosure. Whenever he/she believes he/she can do so consistently with safeguarding both the information and its source, the regional commissioner should direct that the applicant or petitioner be given notice of the general nature of the information and an opportunity to offer opposing evidence. The regional commissioner's authorization to use such classified information shall be made a part of the record. A decision based in whole or in part on such classified information shall state that the information is material to the decision.

Clearly, the language of the regulation does not mandate that the Service or its successor USCIS provide an applicant or petitioner with a copy of a document containing derogatory information used to deny an application or petition. Rather, the regulation requires that an applicant or petitioner be advised of such derogatory information and offered an opportunity to rebut the information and present information in his or her own behalf before the decision is rendered. This is the procedure that has been utilized in the instant case as the AAO issued a notice to the parties specifically informing the applicant and counsel of the derogatory information relating to the photocopied envelopes cited above and the corresponding page numbers and catalogue numbers of the stamps as contained in Volume 4 of the *2010 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*.

Counsel challenges the AAO's reliance upon the *2010 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* as an authority and contends that the AAO should submit the photocopied envelopes to the Mexico Elmhurst Philatelic Society International or MEPSI (a philatelic organization that



advertises in the *2010 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*) for verification. Counsel submits printouts from this organization's internet website. However, a review of the Amos Press Inc., internet website at [REDACTED] reveals the following:

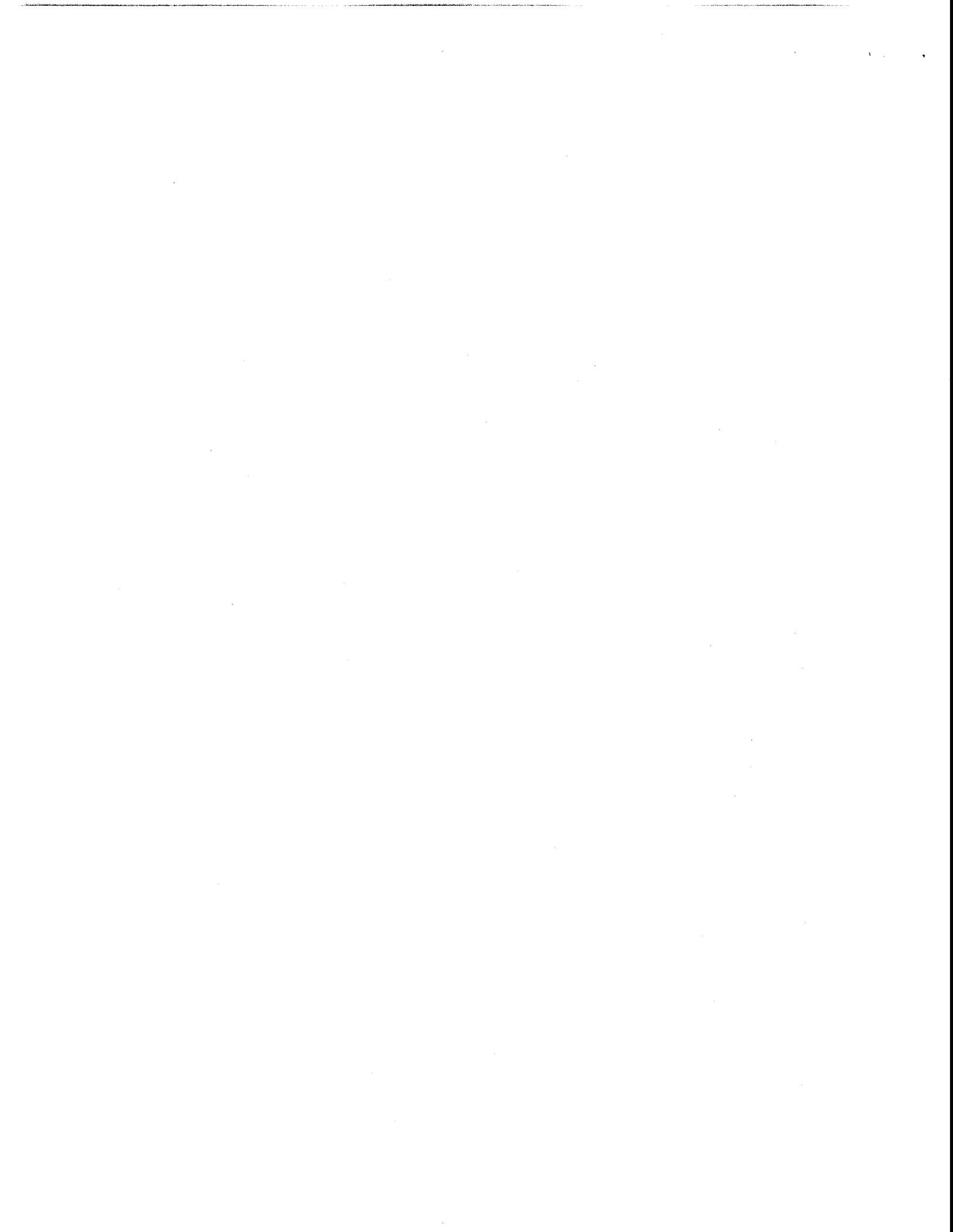
In 1984 Amos Publishing became the world's largest philatelic publisher with the purchase of Scott Publishing Company. Scott is the most recognized name in stamp collecting and is both a publisher and merchandiser of stamp related products. The internationally renowned, 8-volume [REDACTED] *Catalogue* is produced annually to assist collectors in valuing and identifying their stamp holdings. A monthly magazine is also produced under the Scott name which provides collectors with entertaining and informative feature articles along with the very latest new stamp issues from around the world.

While the [REDACTED] is privately published, it is considered to be so authoritative on the subject of postage stamps and philately (stamp collecting) that the United States Postal Service has adopted the [REDACTED] as its own for identification purposes of all postage stamps issued by the United States. Further, recent editions of the [REDACTED] are maintained at the reference desks of a large number of public libraries in the United States because the catalogue is considered to be an authoritative resource source on the subject of postage stamps and philately.

The record shows that counsel possesses photocopies of the envelopes in question as they were provided to counsel when USCIS complied with counsel's request for a copy of the record of proceedings and mailed a copy of the record to counsel on November 10, 2009. If the applicant and counsel wish to avail themselves of the verification services provided by MEPSI, they must make the effort to do so at their own expense as the applicant 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 under the provisions of section 212(a) of the Act, and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status under this section pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.12(e).

The existence of derogatory information that establishes the applicant used postmarked envelopes in a fraudulent manner and made material misrepresentations negates the credibility of the applicant's claim of residence in this country for the requisite period, as well as the credibility of the documents submitted in support of such claim. Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.12(e), the inference to be drawn from the documentation provided shall depend on the extent of the documentation, its credibility and amenability to verification. The applicant has failed to submit sufficient credible documentation to meet his burden of proof in establishing that he has resided in the United States for the requisite period by a preponderance of the evidence as required under both 8 C.F.R. § 245a.12(e) and *Matter of E- M-*, 20 I&N Dec. 77 (Comm. 1989).

Given the applicant's reliance upon documents with minimal or no probative value, it is concluded that he has failed to establish continuous residence in an unlawful status in the United States from prior to January 1, 1982 through May 4, 1988 as required under section 1104(c)(2)(B) of the LIFE



Act. Because the applicant has failed to provide independent and objective evidence to overcome, fully and persuasively, our finding that he submitted falsified documents, we affirm our finding of fraud. The applicant is, therefore, ineligible for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act on this basis.

A finding of fraud is entered into the record, and the matter will be referred to the United States Attorney for possible prosecution as provided in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.21(c).

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

