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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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FILE:



Office: Vermont Service Center

Date:

OCT 04 2007

[WAC 99 182 52867]

IN RE:

Applicant:



APPLICATION:

Application for Temporary Protected Status under Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1254.

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to the Vermont Service Center. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. P. Wiemann".

for Robert P. Wiemann, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The applicant's temporary protected status was withdrawn by the Director, California Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant is a citizen of Honduras who is seeking Temporary Protected Status (TPS) under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1254.

The record reveals that the applicant filed an initial TPS application on June 9, 1999, under CIS receipt number WAC 99 182 52867. The Director, Vermont Service Center, approved that application.

The director withdrew the applicant's TPS, on September 5, 2006, because the applicant had two criminal convictions. The director noted that the applicant submitted final court dispositions which indicated that the applicant had been convicted, on nolo contendere pleas, of two violations of Section 273.5(A) (PC).

The director may withdraw the status of an alien granted temporary protected status under section 244 of the Act at any time if it is determined that "the alien was not in fact eligible for such status" or if "the alien fails, without good cause, to re-register ... in a form and manner specified by" the Secretary. The Regulations under 8 C.F.R. § 244.14(a)(1) and (3) further states that the director may withdraw the status of an alien granted TPS if, "the alien was not in fact eligible at the time such status was granted, or at any time thereafter becomes ineligible for such status," or if, "the alien fails without good cause to re-register".

After a review of the record, the Chief, AAO, concurs with the director's withdrawal decision. The applicant has not overcome the findings of the director pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 244.14.

The final court dispositions in the record of proceedings reveal that:

1. On August 18, 2003, the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, California, convicted the applicant on a nolo contendere plea, of violating Section 273.5(A) PC, a misdemeanor. The applicant was sentenced to 3 years probation, 5 days jail, and fined \$435.00; and,
2. On July 7, 2005, the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, California, convicted the applicant on a nolo contendere plea, of violating Section 273.5(A) PC, a misdemeanor. The applicant was sentenced to 3 years probation, 17 days jail, and fined \$655.00.

An alien shall not be eligible for temporary protected status under this section if the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security finds that the alien has been convicted of any felony or two or more misdemeanors committed in the United States. See Section 244(c)(2)(B)(i) of the Act, and 8 C.F.R. § 244.4(a).

Final court dispositions in the record of proceedings confirm that the applicant has two misdemeanor convictions (described above).

On appeal, counsel states that although the applicant's 2 misdemeanors convictions would render the applicant ineligible for TPS, the applicant has requested that one of the convictions be "set aside and dismissed". Counsel contends, therefore, that the conviction should not be considered in determining the applicant's eligibility for TPS. With the appeal, counsel resubmits photocopies of final court dispositions.

The court record, however, clearly shows that the applicant was convicted of two misdemeanors, described above. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) is required to rely on the court record as it stands, and cannot make determinations of guilt or innocence based on that record. Furthermore, CIS may only look to the judicial records to determine whether the person has been convicted of the crime, and may not look behind the conviction to reach an independent determination concerning guilt or innocence. *Pablo v. INS*, 72 F.3d 110, 113 (9th Cir. 1995); *Gouveia v. INS*, 980 F.2d 814, 817 (1st Cir. 1992); and *Matter of Roberts*, 20 I&N Dec. 294 (BIA 1991).

Section 244(c) of the Act, and the related regulations in 8 C.F.R. § 244.2, provide that an applicant who is a national of a foreign state designated by the Attorney General is eligible for temporary protected status only if such alien establishes that he or she:

- (a) Is a national, as defined in section 101(a)(21) of the Act, of a foreign state designated under section 244(b) of the Act;
- (b) Has been continuously physically present in the United States since the effective date of the most recent designation of that foreign state;
- (c) Has continuously resided in the United States since such date as the Attorney General may designate;
- (d) Is admissible as an immigrant except as provided under section 244.3;
- (e) Is not ineligible under 8 C.F.R. § 244.4; and
- (f)
 - (1) Registers for TPS during the initial registration period announced by public notice in the *Federal Register*, or
 - (2) During any subsequent extension of such designation, if at the time of the initial registration period:

Section 244(c) ALIENS ELIGIBLE FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS.-

(2) ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS.-

(B) ALIENS INELIGIBLE. - An alien shall not be eligible for temporary protected status under this section if the Attorney General finds that-

- (i) the alien has been convicted of any felony or 2 misdemeanors committed in the United States,....

8 C.F.R. § 244.1 defines "felony" and "misdemeanor:"

Felony means a crime committed in the United States, punishable by imprisonment for a term of more than one year, regardless of the term such alien actually served, if any, except: 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 such alien actually served. Under this exception for purposes of section 244 of the Act, the crime shall be treated as a misdemeanor.

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 such alien actually served, if any, or
- (2) A crime treated as a misdemeanor under the term "felony" of this section.

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.

As noted above, the record reveals two misdemeanor convictions for the applicant. Therefore, the applicant is ineligible for TPS due to his record of two misdemeanor convictions, detailed above, and he is not eligible for TPS. Section 244(c)(2)(B)(i) of the Act and 8 C.F.R. § 244.4(a). Consequently, the director's decision to withdraw TPS will be affirmed.

An alien applying for temporary protected status has the burden of proving that he or she meets the requirements enumerated above and is otherwise eligible under the provisions of section 244 of the Act. The applicant has failed to meet this burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.