



March 25, 2004

Press Release

USCIS REMINDS APPLICANTS FOR ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS TO OBTAIN ADVANCE PAROLE BEFORE TRAVELING ABROAD

WASHINGTON, DC - U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) reminds individuals with an application for adjustment of status to that of lawful permanent resident, an application for relief under the NACARA 203, or an asylum application, that they must obtain Advance Parole by filing Form I-131-- Application for Travel Document with the USCIS before traveling abroad (see USCIS Travel Advisory Questions and Answers). Advance Parole is permission to re-enter the United States after traveling abroad in order to continue processing for adjustment of status. Such individuals must be approved for Advance Parole before leaving the United States. Travel outside of the United States without advance parole may have severe consequences for certain individuals who are in the process of adjusting their status. Such individuals may be unable to return to the United States, their applications may be denied, or both.

“Issuing this travel reminder ensures that our USCIS customers are aware of the immigration travel requirements before they make holiday or vacation travel plans to their home country,” said Eduardo Aguirre, Director of USCIS.

Note:

Under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, aliens who depart the United States after being unlawfully present in the United States for certain periods can be barred from admission to lawful permanent resident status, even if they have obtained Advance Parole. Those aliens who have been unlawfully present in the United States for more than 180 days, but less than one year are inadmissible for three years; those who have been unlawfully present for a year or more are inadmissible for 10 years. Aliens who are unlawfully present, depart the U.S. and subsequently reenter under a grant of parole, may nevertheless be ineligible to adjust their status.

USCIS urges all aliens with pending applications for adjustment of status to consult an immigration attorney, immigration assistance organization accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals, the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283, or the USCIS web site: www.uscis.gov before making any foreign travel plans.

- USCIS -

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.