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NEWS RELEASE

May 20, 1999

INS Announces New Program for NACARA Beneficiaries; Interim Rule Describes Simplified, Accessible Application Process

WASHINGTON – Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Commissioner Doris Meissner announced today new implementation rules for a special program under which certain qualified Salvadoran, Guatemalan and former Soviet Bloc nationals can apply for relief from deportation through simplified and more accessible procedures. These procedures are described in an interim regulation implementing section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1997.

NACARA allows beneficiaries to apply for suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under the more generous standards in effect before the 1996 immigration law. Individuals granted relief under NACARA will have their status adjusted to that of legal permanent resident.

The regulation will affect approximately 300,000 people: 290,000 Central Americans including 240,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans who are registered members of the *American Baptist Churches v. Thornburgh* (ABC) settlement and approximately 10,000 Eastern Europeans. These are people who have been in the United States for nearly a decade or longer. The interim rule will be published in the Federal Register on May 21, 1999 and will become final on June 21, 1999, after a 30 day comment period.

In a specially designed new procedure, the program will:

- Allow asylum officers, in most cases, to hear suspension claims in non-adversarial settings and to grant permanent relief without the need for the applicant to appear before an immigration judge;
- Simplify the application form for relief, minimizing the need for expensive legal counsel or burdensome searches for documents;
- Identify by regulation the "extreme hardship" standard for relief, which was previously developed through decades of judicial and administrative decisions; and
- Presume that those Salvadorans and Guatemalans who are ABC class members would suffer extreme hardship if returned, greatly expediting the consideration of their applications.

(more)

INS Announces New Program for NACARA Beneficiaries;

Page 2

"Consistent with the commitment President Clinton made when he visited Central America in March, the new program is the culmination of the Administration's efforts to create as accessible and straightforward a process as the law permits," said INS Commissioner Meissner. "We have concluded that the ABC class members' unique immigration history, deep roots in our society, and contributions to our communities mean that the overwhelming number of them are the people Congress meant to reach by providing relief under NACARA. The presumption of extreme hardship simplifies the process of achieving that goal."

The interim rule incorporates many of the comments and suggestions submitted by the public in more than 400 comments. Almost all endorsed expanding the authority of the asylum officers to decide these applications and encouraged the Department to adopt a presumption of hardship that further simplifies the process.

The process implemented by this interim regulation benefits the government as well as the applicant by using government resources as effectively as possible.

Presumption of Hardship

The presumption of hardship is grounded in the common past experiences and present circumstances of Salvadorans and Guatemalans who are ABC class members within the scope and intent of NACARA. These Salvadorans and Guatemalans, who fled civil war and political violence have all been in the United States for at least eight years, many for much longer. They are a defined and limited group of people who have been known to the government for years. Their "temporary" stay has been authorized by a series of statutory, administrative and judicial actions. During this time, most have developed deep roots in and made significant contributions to this country. These common characteristics strongly predict that the removal of individuals who are members of the ABC class would cause extreme hardship.

The presumption will simplify and expedite the consideration of ABC claims. The regulations nevertheless require a case-by-case review of each application, and allow the government to challenge the application for relief when there is no evidence of factors associated with extreme hardship (for example, where an applicant has no family in the United States, no work history and no ties to the community) or where evidence in the record significantly undermines the basic assumption on which the presumption is based (such as where an applicant has substantial resources in his or her own country).

Although INS determined that a blanket presumption of hardship could not be supported by law, non ABC class members may also meet the "extreme hardship" standard for relief depending on their individual circumstances.

(more)

INS Announces New Program for NACARA Beneficiaries;
Page 3

The regulations apply to cases made before asylum officers and immigration judges. Both INS and EOIR plan to hold training prior to implementation of the rule on June 21, to ensure that the provisions of the regulation are applied consistently and fairly in each case.

NOTE: For further information about today's announcement a Fact Sheet and Questions and Answers are available upon request or can be found on the INS website, www.ins.usdoj.gov

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U.S. Department of Justice
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

FACT SHEET

05/20/99

Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment And Central American Relief Act

■ Benefits

Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) provides that certain Guatemalans, Salvadorans and nationals of former Soviet bloc countries are eligible to apply for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal under standards similar to those that existed for suspension of deportation prior to the enactment of the September 1996 immigration law.

The rule published today by INS creates a new program that expands the authority of INS asylum officers to consider the vast majority of NACARA applications. This expanded authority of INS asylum officers streamlines the process and provides an efficient and simplified method for resolving a large number of the claims at an earlier stage in the administrative process. To provide guidance to applicants and adjudicators, the rule codifies for the first time a non-exhaustive list of the relevant factors for evaluating extreme hardship that are identified within existing case law. The rule further simplifies the process for most NACARA beneficiaries by creating a rebuttable presumption of extreme hardship for class members of the *American Baptist Churches vs. Thornburgh* (ABC) lawsuit.

■ Eligibility

Individuals may apply for benefits under NACARA if they are in any of the four categories described below and have not been convicted of an aggravated felony.

- **Salvadoran** nationals who filed applications for asylum on or before April 1, 1990, OR who meet each of the following requirements:

- First entered the United States on or before September 19, 1990;
- Registered for benefits under the *American Baptist Churches vs. Thornburgh* (ABC) settlement agreement on or before October 31, 1991, (either by submitting an ABC registration form or by applying for Temporary Protected Status); AND
- Were not apprehended at the time of entry, if they entered the United States after December 19, 1990.

- **Guatemalan** nationals who filed applications for asylum on or before April 1, 1990, OR who meet each of the following requirements:

- First entered the United States on or before October 1, 1990;
- Registered for benefits under ABC on or before December 31, 1991; AND
- Were not apprehended at the time of entry if, they entered the United States after December 19, 1990.

Application Procedures for NACARA Section 203

Page 2

■ Individuals who at the time they filed an asylum application as noted below were nationals of the Soviet Union, Russia, any republic of the former Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia or any state of the former Yugoslavia, and

- Entered the United States on or before December 31, 1990; AND
- Filed an application for asylum on or before December 31, 1991.

■ Individuals who are the spouse, child or unmarried son or daughter of a person described in the above categories and who also meet the following requirements:

- The spouse or parent described in one of the three categories above has been granted suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal;
- The relationship to that spouse or parent existed when the spouse or parent was granted the benefit; AND
- Unmarried sons or daughters who were 21 years of age or older at the time their parent was granted the benefit must have entered the United States on or before October 1, 1990.

■ Eligibility for Suspension of Deportation or Special Rule Cancellation of Removal

Individuals who are inadmissible or deportable from the United States may qualify for special rule cancellation of removal (inadmissible or deportable) or suspension of deportation (only deportable) if:

- They have been in the United States for seven years;
- They are found to have had good moral character during those seven years;
- Return to their country would result in extreme hardship to them or their spouse, child or parent who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident; and
- They merit a favorable exercise of discretion.

Individuals convicted of crimes may still be eligible to apply under a heightened standard, depending on the type of crime committed. The heightened standard includes, among other requirements, a longer continuous physical presence requirement (10 years) and a higher degree of hardship if they are removed or deported. Anyone convicted at any time of a crime defined as an aggravated felony under immigration law is not eligible to apply.

■ Factors in Determining Extreme Hardship

To establish extreme hardship, an applicant must demonstrate that deportation or removal would result in a degree of hardship beyond that typically associated with deportation. Factors that may be considered in evaluating whether deportation or removal would result in extreme hardship to the individual or to the individual's qualified relative include, but are not limited to, the following:

Application Procedures for NACARA Section 203

Page 3

- Age of the individual, both at the time of entry to the United States and at the time of application for NACARA relief;
- Age, number and immigration status of the individual's children and their ability to speak the native language and to adjust to life in the country of return;
- Health condition of the individual or the individual's children, spouse or parents and the availability of any required medical treatment in the country to which the individual would be returned;
- Length of residence in the United States;
- Existence of other family members who are or will be legally residing in the United States;
- Financial impact of the individual's departure;
- Impact of a disruption of educational opportunities;
- Psychological impact of the individual's departure;
- Current political and economic conditions in the country to which the individual would be returned;
- Family and other ties to the country to which the individual would be returned;
- Contributions and ties to a community in the United States, including degree of integration into the society;
- Immigration history, including authorized residence in the United States; and
- Availability of other means of adjusting to permanent resident status.

■ Rebuttable Presumption of Extreme Hardship

Because ABC class members generally share several identifiable factors that have been found to lead to a finding of extreme hardship, the rule gives NACARA-eligible ABC class members a rebuttable presumption of extreme hardship. All Guatemalans who entered the United States on or before October 1, 1990, and all Salvadorans who entered the United States on or before September 19, 1990, are members of the ABC class.

ABC class members will be presumed to have established extreme hardship if they submit a completed application form that answers basic questions regarding extreme hardship. The presumption may be rebutted if INS shows that neither the applicant nor the applicant's qualified relative, if any, would suffer extreme hardship. Circumstances that may rebut the presumption include a finding of ample personal financial resources in the country of return or a lack of ties to the community and the absence of any other factors that would result in hardship. The presumption allows INS to adopt a streamlined approach to processing the applications, but still requires a case-by-case review.

Although the presumption of extreme hardship extends only to NACARA-eligible ABC class members, some other NACARA beneficiaries may have characteristics that are similar to those shared by the ABC class. The regulations specifically require adjudicators to consider the presence of those characteristics, such as evidence of an

Application Procedures for NACARA Section 203

Page 4

extended stay in the United States without fear of deportation and with the benefit of work authorization, in evaluating extreme hardship.

■ Application Procedures

Who Can Apply With INS?

Most NACARA beneficiaries will be able to apply for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal with the INS asylum program. This includes the following

- ABC class members who are eligible for benefits of the ABC settlement agreement and have asylum applications pending with INS;
- Guatemalan or Salvadoran nationals who applied for asylum on or before April 1, 1990 and whose asylum applications are still pending with INS;
- Former Soviet Bloc nationals who are eligible to apply under section 203 of NACARA and whose asylum applications are still pending with INS; and
- Certain qualified family members of individuals who have applied to INS for benefits under section 203 of NACARA.

Generally, individuals who have been placed in deportation or removal proceedings must apply for relief under section 203 with the immigration judge. However, certain individuals whose proceedings have been closed by the immigration judge or continued by the Board of Immigration Appeals may be able to apply with INS. These include the following:

- An ABC class member who had proceedings administratively closed by the immigration judge or continued by the Board of Immigration Appeals and who is entitled to a new asylum adjudication before INS under the ABC settlement;
- An ABC class member who is entitled to a new asylum adjudication before INS under the ABC settlement and is subject to a final order of deportation or removal and who filed and was granted a motion to reopen as permitted by NACARA.
- A qualified family member of a NACARA beneficiary who has already filed a NACARA application with INS, if the immigration judge has administratively closed the family member's proceedings.

When to Apply

Applications may be submitted to INS once the interim rule is effective on June 21, 1999. Individuals who are in deportation or removal proceedings have been able to submit applications to the Immigration Court since NACARA was enacted and may continue to do so.

How to Apply

A separate Form I-881, Application for Suspension of Deportation or Special Rule Cancellation of Removal under section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), must be completed and submitted for each person

Application Procedures for NACARA Section 203

Page 5

applying for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal. INS expects to have this form available to the public by the effective date of the interim rule.

Each applicant must send the following documents to the INS Service Center with jurisdiction over their state of residence:

- Completed Form I-881 (original and one copy);
- Two passport-style photographs; and
- Payment of the appropriate fee.

An applicant is also encouraged to include supporting documents that show the applicant has been continuously present in the United States for the previous seven years, has good moral character, and will experience extreme hardship if removed to his or her native country. Applicants who are eligible to apply because of a relationship to another NACARA beneficiary (spouse or parent) should include documentation establishing the relationship.

ABC class members will not initially have to submit documents or other evidence demonstrating extreme hardship.

Fees

The fees for NACARA 203 are as follows:

- **Form I-881** – \$215 for an individual or \$430 for a family if all applications are submitted together in a single packet;
- **Fingerprinting Fee** – \$25 for each applicant over 14 years of age; and
- **Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization** – \$100 (This form is only needed if an applicant does not have and wishes to receive employment authorization based on eligibility for NACARA benefits).

■ Work Authorization

An applicants with an unexpired work authorization may continue to use it during the application process. Any applicant who wishes to obtain initial employment authorization, or continued authorization while a NACARA application is pending, should file a Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, with the INS Service Center where the applicant filed the NACARA application.

■ Travel

An applicant who plans to leave the United States before a decision is made on the NACARA application must request and receive advance parole to ensure permission to re-enter the country. Advance parole may be requested on a Form I-131, Application for a Travel Document. Certain absences from the United States, even with advance parole, may interrupt the required continuous physical presence in the United States, depending on the length of the absence and the purpose of the absence.

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U.S. Department of Justice
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

5/20/99

Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment And Central American Relief Act of 1997

INS Publishes Interim Rule For Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Former Soviet Bloc Nationals And Their Qualified Family Members

Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) provides that certain Guatemalans, Salvadorans and nationals of former Soviet bloc countries are eligible to apply for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal under standards similar to those that existed for suspension of deportation prior to the enactment of the September 1996 immigration law. Individuals granted suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under NACARA will have their status adjusted to that of lawful permanent resident.

Q1. What does the interim regulation do?

A. The rule published today by INS creates a new program that expands the authority of INS asylum officers to consider the vast majority of NACARA applications. This expanded authority of INS asylum officers streamlines the process and provides an efficient and simplified method for resolving a large number of the claims at an earlier stage in the administrative process. To provide guidance to applicants and adjudicators, the rule codifies for the first time a non-exhaustive list of the relevant factors for evaluating extreme hardship that are identified within existing case law. The rule further simplifies the process for the majority of NACARA beneficiaries by creating a rebuttable presumption of extreme hardship for class members of the *American Baptist Churches vs. Thornburgh* (ABC) lawsuit.

Q2: Why is INS issuing an interim rule? Why not a final rule?

A: The adoption of a rebuttable presumption of hardship represents a significant and substantive change from the proposed rule. The Department of Justice and INS felt that issuing an interim rule and allowing comments would be the most appropriate course of action. The rule will become final on June 21 after a 30 day comment period.

Q3: What is INS' estimate for the number of people who are effected by the regulation? What are the breakdowns?

A: INS believes that there are approximately 300,000 people who are eligible to apply for suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under section 203 of NACARA. Of that 300,000 INS estimates that 240,000 are ABC class members; 50,000 are Guatemalans and Salvadorans who are non ABC class members and 10,000 are nationals of former Soviet bloc countries.

NACARA Section 203 Q&As

Page 2

Q4. What are suspension of deportation and cancellation of removal?

A. Suspension of deportation and cancellation of removal are forms of discretionary relief from deportation or removal for individuals who are subject to deportation or removal. Individuals granted suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under NACARA will have their status adjusted to that of a lawful permanent resident.

Q5. What is the difference between suspension of deportation and special rule cancellation of removal?

A. Suspension of deportation is available only to people who are deportable from the United States and who were placed in immigration proceedings prior to April 1, 1997. Special rule cancellation of removal is available to people who are inadmissible or removable and who were placed in immigration proceedings on or after April 1, 1997. The interim rule also makes special rule cancellation of removal available to qualified NACARA beneficiaries who have not been placed in removal proceedings and are eligible to apply for the benefit with the INS Asylum Program. The basic eligibility requirements for suspension of deportation and special rule cancellation of removal are very similar.

Q6. Who can apply for benefits under the suspension/special rule cancellation provisions in NACARA?

A. Individuals may apply for benefits under NACARA if they are in any of the four categories described below and have not been convicted of an aggravated felony,

- Salvadoran nationals who filed applications for asylum on or before April 1, 1990, OR who meet each of the following requirements:
 - First entered the United States on or before September 19, 1990;
 - Registered for benefits under the *American Baptist Churches vs. Thornburgh* (ABC) settlement agreement on or before October 31, 1991, (either by submitting an ABC registration form or by applying for Temporary Protected Status); AND
 - Were not apprehended at the time of entry if entry occurred after December 19, 1990.

- Guatemalan nationals who filed applications for asylum on or before April 1, 1990, OR who meet each of the following requirements:

- First entered the United States on or before October 1, 1990;
- Registered for benefits under ABC on or before December 31, 1991; AND
- Were not apprehended at the time of entry if entry occurred after December 19, 1990.

- Individuals who at the time they filed an asylum application as noted below were nationals of the Soviet Union, Russia, any republic of the former Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia or any state of the former Yugoslavia, and

NACARA Section 203 Q&AsPage 3

- Entered the United States on or before December 31, 1990; AND
- Filed an application for asylum on or before December 31, 1991.
- Individuals who are the spouse, child or unmarried son or daughter of a person described in the above categories and who also meet the following requirements:
 - The spouse or parent described in the three categories above has been granted suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal;
 - The relationship to that spouse or parent existed when the spouse or parent was granted the benefit; AND
 - Unmarried sons or daughters who were 21 years of age or older at the time their parent was granted the benefit must have entered the United States on or before October 1, 1990.

Q7. What requirements are needed to be granted suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal?

A. Individuals who are inadmissible or deportable from the United States may qualify for special rule cancellation of removal (inadmissible or deportable) or suspension of deportation (only deportable) if:

- They have been continuously present in the United States for seven years;
- They are found to have had good moral character during those seven years;
- Return to their country would result in extreme hardship to them or their spouse, child or parent who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident; and
- They merit a favorable exercise of discretion.

Individuals convicted of crimes may still be eligible to apply under a heightened standard, depending on the type of crime committed. The heightened standard includes, among other requirements, a longer continuous physical presence requirement (10 years) and a higher degree of hardship if they are removed or deported. Anyone convicted at any time of a crime defined as an aggravated felony under immigration law is not eligible to apply.

Q8. What factors are considered in evaluating extreme hardship?

A. To establish extreme hardship, an applicant must demonstrate that deportation or removal would result in a degree of hardship beyond that typically associated with deportation or removal. Factors that may be considered in evaluating whether deportation would result in extreme hardship to the individual or to the individual's qualified relative include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Age of the individual, both at the time of entry to the United States and at the time of application for suspension of deportation;
- Age, number and immigration status of the individual's children and their ability to speak the native language and to adjust to life in the country of return;

NACARA Section 203 Q&As**Page 4**

- Health condition of the individual or the individual's children, spouse or parents and the availability of any required medical treatment in the country to which the individual would be returned;
- Length of residence in the United States;
- Existence of other family members who are or will be legally residing in the United States;
- Financial impact of the individual's departure;
- Impact of a disruption of educational opportunities;
- Psychological impact of the individual's departure;
- Current political and economic conditions in the country to which the individual would be returned;
- Family and other ties to the country to which the individual would be returned;
- Contributions and ties to a community in the United States, including degree of integration into the society;
- Immigration history, including authorized residence in the United States; and
- Availability of other means of adjusting to permanent resident status.

Because ABC class members generally share several identifiable factors that have been found to lead to a finding of extreme hardship, the rule gives NACARA-eligible ABC class members a rebuttable presumption of extreme hardship. All Guatemalans who entered the United States on or before October 1, 1990, and all Salvadorans who entered the United States on or before September 19, 1990, are members of the ABC class.

Q9. What is the effect of a rebuttable presumption of extreme hardship?

A. Because ABC class members generally share several identifiable factors that have been found to lead to a finding of extreme hardship, the rule gives NACARA-eligible ABC class members a rebuttable presumption of extreme hardship. All Guatemalans who entered the United States on or before October 1, 1990, and all Salvadorans who entered the United States on or before September 19, 1990, are members of the ABC class.

ABC class members will be presumed to have established extreme hardship if they submit a completed application form that answers basic questions regarding extreme hardship. The presumption may be rebutted if INS shows that neither the applicant nor the applicant's qualified relative, if any, would suffer extreme hardship. Circumstances that may rebut the presumption include a finding of ample personal financial resources in the country of return or a lack of ties to the community and the absence of any other factors that would result in hardship. The presumption allows INS to adopt a streamlined approach to processing the applications, but still requires a case-by-case review.

NACARA Section 203 Q&As**Page 5**

Although the presumption of extreme hardship extends only to NACARA-eligible ABC class members, some other NACARA beneficiaries may have characteristics that are similar to those shared by the ABC class. The regulations specifically require adjudicators to consider the presence of those characteristics, such as evidence of an extended stay in the United States without fear of deportation and with the benefit of work authorization, in evaluating extreme hardship.

Q10. Who is eligible to apply with the INS Asylum Program for this benefit?

A. Most NACARA beneficiaries will be able to apply for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal with the INS Asylum Program. This includes the following:

- ABC class members who are eligible for benefits of the ABC settlement agreement and have asylum applications pending with INS;
- Guatemalan or Salvadoran nationals who applied for asylum on or before April 1, 1990 and whose asylum applications are still pending with INS;
- Former Soviet Bloc nationals who are eligible to apply under section 203 of NACARA and whose asylum applications are still pending with INS and;
- Certain qualified family members of individuals who have applied to INS for benefits under section 203 of NACARA.

Generally, individuals who have been placed in deportation or removal proceedings must apply for relief under section 203 with the immigration judge. However, certain individuals whose proceedings have been closed by the immigration judge or continued by the Board of Immigration Appeals may be able to apply with INS. These include the following:

- An ABC class member who had proceedings administratively closed by the immigration judge or continued by the Board of Immigration Appeals and who is entitled to a new asylum adjudication before INS under the ABC settlement;
- An ABC class member who is entitled to a new asylum adjudication before INS under the ABC settlement and is subject to a final order of deportation or removal and who filed and was granted a motion to reopen as permitted by NACARA.
- A qualified family member of a NACARA beneficiary who has already filed a NACARA application with INS, if the immigration judge has administratively closed the family member's proceedings.

Q11. What if an individual has received a final order of deportation or removal?

An Individual who has a final order of deportation or removal and has become eligible for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal as a result of NACARA, must have filed and been granted a motion to reopen proceedings before the individual may request relief under section 203 of NACARA.

NACARA Section 203 Q&As**Page 6**

Q12. If an individual eligible to apply for section 203 NACARA relief has not been placed in proceedings and does not have an asylum application pending with INS, how may that individual apply for NACARA 203 relief?

A. The Department recognizes that registered ABC class members who never applied for asylum and who have not been placed in immigration proceedings are unable to apply for special rule cancellation of removal unless INS places them in removal proceedings by issuing charging documents. A person may request that the INS district office with jurisdiction over his or her place of residence place him or her in proceedings, but INS retains prosecutorial discretion to determine the priority status of such a request.

Q13. When can a person apply with the INS Asylum Office for this benefit?

A. Applications may be submitted to INS once the interim rule is effective on **June 21, 1999**. Individuals who are in deportation or removal proceedings have been able to submit applications to the Immigration Court since NACARA was enacted and may continue to do so.

Q14. How does a person apply with the INS Asylum Office for this benefit?

A. A separate Form I-881, Application for Suspension of Deportation or Special Rule Cancellation of Removal under section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), must be completed and submitted for each person applying for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal.

Each applicant must send the following documents to the INS Service Center with jurisdiction over their state of residence:

- Completed Form I-881 (original and one copy);
- Two passport-style photographs; and
- Payment of the appropriate fee.

An applicant is also encouraged to include supporting documents that show the applicant has been continuously present in the United States for the previous seven years, has good moral character and will experience extreme hardship if removed to his or her native country. Applicants who are eligible to apply because of a relationship to another NACARA beneficiary (spouse or parent) should include documentation establishing the relationship.

ABC class members will not initially have to submit documents or other evidence demonstrating extreme hardship.

NACARA Section 203 Q&AsPage 7

Q15. What is the fee?

A. The fees for NACARA 203 are as follows:

- **Form I-881** – \$215 for an individual or \$430 for a family if all applications are submitted together in a single packet;
- **Fingerprinting Fee** – \$25 for each applicant over 14 years of age; and
- **Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization** – \$100 (this form is only needed if an applicant does not have and wishes to receive employment authorization based on eligibility for NACARA benefits).

Q16: When will the form be ready?

A: At this time the form is in the review process. INS expects that the form will be approved and available for use before the effective date of the interim regulation on June 21, 1999.

Q17. Can individuals eligible to apply for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal under NACARA apply for employment authorization?

A. Yes. INS believes that many people eligible for special rule cancellation of removal under section 203 of NACARA may already have work authorization based on a pending asylum application. However, if the applicant does not have work authorization and is found eligible to apply for section 203 NACARA relief, he or she may submit a Form I-765, application for employment authorization with the appropriate fee to the same Service Center to which the applicant submitted the I-881.

Q18. What will happen after the person applies with INS?

A. Once the INS Service Center receives the application the following steps will be taken:

- Receipts will be mailed to applicants. Applicants should retain this receipt for their records;
- Applications that are either incomplete or are not accompanied by the correct fee will be rejected and returned to the applicants;
- Employment authorization applications, if filed, will be processed for those applicants whose applications are accepted and;
- Applicants will be scheduled for fingerprinting at an Application Support Center if they are 14 years old or older.
- After the INS Asylum Office has received the results of security checks, applicants will be scheduled for non-adversarial interviews with INS Asylum Officers.
- If the Asylum Officer makes a favorable determination, an applicant will be asked to sign a statement conceding inadmissibility or deportability. This will only be done after a favorable determination is made and must be done before INS can actually grant suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal. Once the

NACARA Section 203 Q&As**Page 8**

concession is made the NACARA application will be granted and the applicant's status will be adjusted to that of lawful permanent resident.

- If the Asylum Officer makes a determination that suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal is not warranted the case will be referred to an immigration judge for adjudication.

Q19. How will applicants be notified as to the decision on their application?

A. Where appropriate applicants may be notified at the time of the interview. In other cases applicants will be asked to come to the INS asylum office to receive a written decision or the decision may be mailed.

- INS -

Internal Q's and A's for NACARA Section 203

1 : When was the decision made to adopt presumption of extreme hardship? Does it not represent a change in your initial position?

INS began to seriously explore the possibility of granting some kind of presumption in January, given the tremendous response to this issue. We received over 400 public comments on our proposed rule the majority of which strongly urged the Department to adopt a presumption of hardship.

2 : Why didn't INS grant presumption of hardship to all NACARA eligible individuals? Why only to ABC class members?

The ABC class is unique in that the INS has had extensive dealings with their cases. This allowed INS to make an informed and educated decision about the likelihood of an extreme hardship determination. INS has no similar general information about non-ABC class members, therefore it is necessary to make extreme hardship determinations on an individual case by case basis for non ABC class individuals.

3 : Does this partial grant really fulfill the President's pledge to create equity between the groups granted benefits under NACARA?

This program represents the culmination of the Administration's efforts to create as equitable, accessible and simple a process as the law permits. However, because the law does not permit the same treatment that was given to Nicaraguans and Cubans, and in order to further fulfill President Clinton's commitment to equity, the Administration will be proposing legislation in the near future that addresses this issue.

4 : Is presumption of extreme hardship beyond the scope of NACARA and indeed a violation of the law as Congressman Smith contends?

No, the Attorney General has the authority to create the appropriate rules and procedures for determining eligibility for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal. We are maintaining the established standards for proving extreme hardship, we are just evaluating the evidentiary requirements differently. In addition, the Department received more than 400 comments, almost all of which strongly urged the Department to adopt a presumption of extreme hardship.

The presumption that is being given to the ABC class members is simply a tool to expedite the process. The characteristics shared by this group of people were such that it was strongly predictable that they would prevail under

extreme hardship. It is not an avenue to grant people something that we do not believe they would have gotten anyway.

5: Is the Administration going to introduce legislation this session to create full parity between the groups granted benefits by NACARA?

President Clinton made a commitment to fair treatment. This rule goes as far as the law possibly permits, fulfilling the president's commitment to the fullest extent under the law. However, the law does not permit the same treatment for everyone as was given to Nicaraguans and Cubans. So in order to further fulfill the president's commitment, the Administration will be proposing legislation in the near future to address this issue.

6: Isn't presumption of hardship just a cover for what is really an amnesty program?

No. A rebuttable presumption operates very differently from a mandatory finding. The rebuttable presumption of hardship requires the applicant to produce some evidence of hardship and the presumption can be overturned by the INS. All applications must still be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis, there is no guarantee of extreme hardship.

7: INS is providing training for its Asylum officers on these new procedures. Will the Immigration Judges, who are also involved in the process be receiving this training?

No. One of the key aspects of section 203 of NACARA is allowing INS asylum officers the opportunity to adjudicate petitions for cancellation of removal or suspension of deportation. This is a function traditionally performed by Immigration Judges therefore it is not necessary to have them undergo training. In addition, Immigration Judges are under the jurisdiction of the Executive Office for Immigration Review, an agency separate from INS, if training was needed it would be EOIR's responsibility to provide it.

INS Training Plan:

Asylum officers will be trained in June and July. The initial training sessions will last three days and cover the law and procedures. The training will be conducted in Los Angeles, Washington DC, Newark, Chicago, and Miami. Officers will travel from other offices to attend one of the trainings at the listed offices. We will follow up with practical exercises over a four week period, all gearing up for the first interviews. In addition, to training asylum officers we will be training INS information officers and contact representatives to respond to general questions.

8: Will this create a backlog within the asylum program?

No. At this time the INS asylum program is able to keep within its 180 day time frame for the majority of new asylum cases. This program will actually help eliminate the lingering asylum backlog which is comprised of mostly ABC cases.

9: You say that the presumption can be overcome in limited circumstances, but the regulatory provision itself doesn't say anything which prevents the INS from challenging the presumption in every case. Why not?

Because the law requires a case by case assessment of eligibility relief from deportation, the rule must provide the flexibility to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to overcome the presumption in each case. But the existence of the presumption itself acts to limit the nature and kinds of cases that the INS would choose to challenge, as rebuttal presumption requires a very high evidentiary showing. Asylum officers and trial attorneys currently work with presumptions in the asylum context, and understand how to evaluate whether there is sufficient evidence to overcome a presumption. The INS will also provide additional training to its personnel to help them identify the types of cases in which it is appropriate to the type of facts that might suggest that the presumption can be overcome.

10: The regulations and materials talk about the unique experiences that ABC class members faced such as fleeing civil war and violence and being productive members of the community this is why they can be granted the presumption of hardship. Does this mean the INS feels that the other NACARA eligible beneficiaries, including people from the same countries as the ABC members, didn't flee civil war and violence and haven't made contributions to the community? Isn't that rather insulting?

No. The ABC class is unique in that the INS has had extensive dealings with their cases. This allowed INS to make an informed and educated decision about the likelihood of an extreme hardship determination. INS in no way means to suggest that other NACARA beneficiaries have not encountered similar ordeals or made similar contributions to the community, nor does it mean to suggest that other NACARA beneficiaries will not prevail in the test for extreme hardship. In fact, if they share a lot of the same characteristics as the ABC class members, it is more than likely that they will prevail and will be granted extreme hardship.

This decision was based on the distinct legal identity of ABC class members. Non-ABC class members will still benefit greatly from the simplified and more accessible procedures.

11: Isn't this partial presumption of extreme hardship just one more example of the Administration's waffling approach to foreign and domestic policy?

Meaning to grant a full presumption of hardship would anger key Republican leaders yet to not grant any would anger the ever more powerful Hispanic vote in an election year so the Administration adopted this middle of the road policy.

The regulation is well grounded in NACARA's ameliorative purposes and balanced approach to fairness. The decision to grant a presumption of hardship for ABC class members was a result of the procedures involved in gathering comments and suggestions following the publication of the proposed rule in November of '98. The Department received more than 400 comments, almost all of which strongly urged the Department to adopt a presumption of extreme hardship.

The unique characteristics of the ABC class allowed INS to make a general conclusion on the likelihood of a favorable determination in applications for suspension of deportation or cancellation removal for ABC class members. The presumption was not extended to all NACARA beneficiaries because INS did not have the general information about this more disparate group to make a similar determination. This does not mean to suggest however, that other NACARA beneficiaries will not prevail in the test for extreme hardship. In fact, if they share a lot of the same characteristics as the ABC class members, it is more than likely that they will prevail and will be granted extreme hardship.

12: When President Clinton sent to Congress the legislation that is now at issue, he promised that all he was doing was assuring that certain Salvadorans and Guatemalans "will continue to be considered and decided under the old suspension of deportation rules...This proposal dictates no particular outcome of any case." Doesn't today's regulation completely contradict that promise, since there was never any "presumption of extreme hardship" under the old rules?

No. The regulation does not alter any of the legal standards for eligibility for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal. The rebuttable presumption of extreme hardship is an evidentiary tool that merely simplifies the process. It is not a blanket determination of hardship. ABC class members will receive a rebuttable presumption because their unique circumstances strongly suggest that their removal would result in extreme hardship. The INS anticipates that they would be able to establish extreme hardship whether or not a presumption exists. Each case will be evaluated individually on its merits. If an adjudicator finds evidence in the record that overcomes the presumption, the applicant will have failed to show the hardship necessary to qualify for NACARA relief.

Internal Q's and A's for NACARA Section 203

1: When was the decision made to adopt presumption of extreme hardship? Does it not represent a change in your initial position?

INS began to seriously explore the possibility of granting some kind of presumption in January, given the tremendous response to this issue. We received over 400 public comments on our proposed rule the majority of which strongly urged the Department to adopt a presumption of hardship.

2: Why didn't INS grant presumption of hardship to all NACARA eligible individuals? Why only to ABC class members?

The ABC class is unique in that the INS has had extensive dealings with their cases. This allowed INS to make an informed and educated decision about the likelihood of an extreme hardship determination. INS has no similar general information about non-ABC class members, therefore it is necessary to make extreme hardship determinations on an individual case by case basis for non ABC class individuals.

3: Does this partial grant really fulfill the President's pledge to create equity between the groups granted benefits under NACARA?

This program represents the culmination of the Administration's efforts to create as equitable, accessible and simple a process as the law permits. However, because the law does not permit the same treatment that was given to Nicaraguans and Cubans, and in order to further fulfill President Clinton's commitment to equity, the Administration will be proposing legislation in the near future that addresses this issue.

4: Is presumption of extreme hardship beyond the scope of NACARA and indeed a violation of the law as Congressman Smith contends?

No, the Attorney General has the authority to create the appropriate rules and procedures for determining eligibility for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal. We are maintaining the established standards for proving extreme hardship, we are just evaluating the evidentiary requirements differently. In addition, the Department received more than 400 comments, almost all of which strongly urged the Department to adopt a presumption of extreme hardship.

The presumption that is being given to the ABC class members is simply a tool to expedite the process. The characteristics shared by this group of people were

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This decision was based on the distinct legal identity of ABC class members. Non-ABC class members will still benefit greatly from the simplified and more accessible procedures.

11: Isn't this partial presumption of extreme hardship just one more

such that it was strongly predictable that they would prevail under extreme hardship. It is not an avenue to grant people something that we do not believe they would have gotten anyway.

5: Is the Administration going to introduce legislation this session to create full parity between the groups granted benefits by NACARA?

President Clinton made a commitment to fair treatment. This rule goes as far as the law possibly permits, fulfilling the president's commitment to the fullest extent under the law. However, the law does not permit the same treatment for everyone as was given to Nicaraguans and Cubans. So in order to further fulfill the president's commitment, the Administration will be proposing legislation in the near future to address this issue.

6: Isn't presumption of hardship just a cover for what is really an amnesty program?

No. A rebuttable presumption operates very differently from a mandatory finding. The rebuttable presumption of hardship requires the applicant to produce some evidence of hardship and the presumption can be overturned by the INS. All applications must still be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis, there is no guarantee of extreme hardship.

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The regulation is well grounded in NACARA's ameliorative purposes and balanced approach to fairness. The decision to grant a presumption of hardship for ABC class members was a result of the procedures involved in incorporating and considering the more than 400 public comments received by the Department, almost all of which strongly urged the Department to adopt a presumption of extreme hardship. The unique characteristics of the ABC class allowed INS to make a general conclusion on the likelihood of a favorable determination in applications for relief from deportation. The presumption was not extended to all NACARA beneficiaries because INS did not have the general information about this more disparate group to make a similar determination.



HERE'S AN INTERESTING FAX...

... From the Office of Public Affairs
U.S. IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE

425 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20536



(202) 514-2648



(202) 514-1776

Date:

May 20, 99

Fax to:

Irene Buer

Fax Number:

456-7028

From:

Maria Cardona

Pages (Including Cover):

3

Comments: Revision on page 1 of Release's Q&A.

National Immigration Forum

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 20, 1999

Contact: Judy Mark
(202) 544-0004, ext. 14

Long-overdue Regulations Offer Promise of Long-overdue Status for 240,000 Salvadoran and Guatemalan Refugees *INS Regulations Honor Legislative Intent for Longtime Refugees; The Devil Is in the Details, and Need for Legislation Persists*

Background

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) released today long-awaited regulations implementing a 1997 immigration law that could ease the way for 240,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans already residing in the United States in legal limbo to become permanent residents.

In 1997, Congress passed the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). The legislation extended automatic permanent residence to Nicaraguans and Cubans in the United States since December 1995, and a less generous provision for similarly-situated Salvadoran and Guatemalan nationals in the U.S. since 1991.

The Salvadorans and Guatemalans eligible for relief are a circumscribed group of war refugees who arrived in the United States in the 1980's. In 1990 they were granted temporary status, which was extended numerous times by two successive Administrations. Faced with mass deportation under 1996 immigration reform legislation, Congress acted to give certain Central Americans a reprieve. Under the 1997 law that subsequently passed, Salvadoran and Guatemalans eligible must apply for "Suspension of Deportation." To win, applicants must convince a judge or immigration officer on a case-by-case basis that they are eligible, are of good moral character, and would suffer "extreme hardship" if returned to their native country. Those approved are granted permanent residence. Those rejected are placed in deportation proceedings.

The legislation's primary authors, a powerful bipartisan group consisting of Senators Kennedy (D-MA), Abraham (R-MI), Graham (D-FL), Mack (R-FL), as well as Rep. Diaz-Balart (R-FL), have consistently and repeatedly called on the INS to ease the evidentiary hardship burden for these deserving refugees. They cite the generous intent of the legislation as well as the unique history of the Salvadorans and Guatemalans who fled the horrors of civil war and have, over the last ten years and more, sunk deep roots here in the United States.

Last November, the INS published regulations that set rules for the Salvadorans and Guatemalans covered by NACARA. Much to the dismay of those affected, the proposed rules adopted an unnecessarily restrictive interpretation of the law. If the program had been implemented as proposed, many long time residents would have given deportation orders rather than permanent residence. This fear took on added urgency after Hurricane Mitch, since the region's economy depends in large measure on annual remittances from Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants here to the region exceeding a billion dollars a year.

more...

The following is a statement from Angela Kelley, Deputy Director of the National Immigration Forum:

“Overall, we are quite pleased. If implemented properly, this program could provide a measure of justice to a defined group of hardworking, long-established refugees who have prospered in the United States despite having been treated unfairly under U.S. asylum and immigration laws for almost two decades.

These rules fall squarely within the four corners of the law as written, and go a long way towards meeting the demands of the law’s powerful bipartisan patrons, who over the last 18 months have insisted on a fair and streamlined process that takes into account the unique history of these war refugees.

The challenge now is for the INS to implement the program in the spirit of the law and the new rules, and for Congress and the Administration to amend the law to extend to Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the U.S. the same generous treatment previously provided Nicaraguans and Cubans in the U.S.

The issue of how the U.S. government treats refugees from Central America has been a defining issue in the immigration and asylum debate since the early 1980’s.

- Despite the fact these Salvadorans and Guatemalans fled brutal civil wars and widespread persecution in the 1980’s, they were consistently denied a fair chance to win political asylum throughout the 1980’s because of Cold War bias.
- In 1990 a lawsuit settlement and legislation finally provided temporary and renewable work permits, but those who came forward have been kept in legal limbo for almost a decade.
- When legislation providing relief was enacted in 1997, Congress gave similarly-situated refugees from Nicaragua and Cuba far more generous treatment.
- When the Administration proposed rules outlining the process for Salvadorans and Guatemalans in November of last year, just days following the hemisphere’s worst natural disaster ravaged the region, the program looked more like a deportation trap than a path to permanent residence.

This is an extremely deserving group of refugees who have been given the short end of the stick for much too long.

Beyond righting the wrongs of the past, granting permanent residence to Central American immigrants established in the United States clearly serves our national interest. When Central Americans here are given security and stability, they can earn higher wages, and send more money home to loved ones in Central America. These remittances are essential to sustaining the region’s economy, protecting against renewed political instability, helping Central America recover from Hurricane Mitch, and reducing future migration pressures.”

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News



Site Index



latimes.com

FRONT PAGE

HELP?

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Plan to Aid Salvadoran, Guatemalan Immigrants

■ Refugees: Clinton program to virtually guarantee legal residency for up to 500,000 from two nations. As many as half of them live in Southland.

By JAMES GERSTENZANG, PATRICK J. MCDONNELL, *Times Staff Writers*

WASHINGTON--The Clinton administration will implement guidelines that virtually guarantee legal residency in the United States for as many as 500,000 immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala, a senior White House official said Wednesday.

The steps, which are expected to be announced by immigration authorities today, are intended to resolve one of the most difficult immigration problems facing the nation.

The plan would make it possible for immigrants who fled civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s to avoid deportation without having to go through the cumbersome, and often impossible, task of proving that they would suffer extreme hardship if they were sent back to their homelands.

Rather, the U.S. government would presume that they would be subject to such hardship, a key step for meeting the rules to remain here as legal immigrants.

Perhaps half those affected by the new rules live in Southern California.

Leaders of immigrant communities described the new plan as a landmark step for those who fled their homelands during Cold War-era strife but have lived for years under the threat of deportation.

"This is a landmark in the struggle for Central American immigrants in this country, and especially in Los Angeles, which is the hub of the community," said Judy London, legal director of the Central American Resource Center in Los Angeles. "Just the fact that there is a presumption of hardship is a tremendous victory and will make the process for applicants more fair and humane."

However, activists also stressed that the application process remains lengthy and expensive and it was unclear how liberally the Immigration and Naturalization Service will carry out the new rules.

Central American community activists and their supporters had lobbied hard for the new policy, pressing the administration to respond to a plea from a Latino community that has become an important Democratic Party ally, particularly in California.

Administration officials were prepared for strong objections from several members of Congress, including Rep. Lamar S.

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Smith (R-Texas), chairman of the immigration and claims subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee. However, the administration's plan does not require congressional approval.

"We think the immigration groups will be pleased," said Maria Echaveste, a deputy White House chief of staff. But, she said, some groups still are likely to seek a blanket amnesty.

The policy is intended to give the Salvadorans and Guatemalans treatment closer to that afforded Nicaraguans under a 1997 law known as the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act. The statute granted outright amnesty to as many as 150,000 Nicaraguans but required Salvadorans and Guatemalans to prove their hardship claims on a case-by-case basis.

Authors of the law, reflecting lingering Cold War attitudes, saw Nicaraguans largely as refugees from the left-wing Sandinista regime, but Salvadorans and Guatemalans, who arrived in the United States at the same time, had fled right-wing governments supported by the Reagan and Bush administrations.

President Clinton "was very clear. He wanted to end the discrimination between fighters on the left and fighters on the right," an administration official said.

About 200,000 immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala are believed to be eligible for residency under the policy, according to community and government estimates. All must have been in the country by 1990. Their minor children and spouses will also be eligible, boosting the number of people who could end up with legal status to half a million.

"This is going to be big in L.A., which has one of the largest Salvadoran populations in the United States," Echaveste said.

The Clinton administration had signaled the approach on which it decided early in March, as Clinton embarked on a four-day tour of Central America. At the time, Clinton came under pressure from the presidents with whom he met to act quickly to resolve the issue. They expressed concern that a sudden return of hundreds of thousands of immigrants would further stress economies struggling to overcome the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in November.

The White House sent the matter to the Justice Department, the parent agency of INS, with Clinton's preference clearly stated. But the department raised objections, first questioning whether the presumption of hardship on which the new policy is based is a legal course, and then moving slowly in the face of what it anticipated would be an outcry from key figures in the congressional debate on immigration.

The decision culminates an epic legal and political struggle that started in the 1980s as tens of thousands of Central Americans began arriving in the United States, often having crossed the U.S.-Mexico border illegally. Many applied for political asylum, but Salvadorans and Guatemalans seldom were granted safe haven--a fact that activists said in a federal class-action case was proof of discrimination against them.

That suit was settled in 1990, providing protection--and temporary working permits--for hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans and Guatemalans. Congress and successive administrations later extended their temporary legal status until a permanent solution could be worked out.

The 1997 law was supposed to resolve the dilemma faced

by Central American immigrants. But the treatment of Salvadorans and Guatemalans compared to that of Nicaraguans and Cubans left many bitterly disappointed.

The Clinton administration's decision goes part of the way toward resolving the disparity, community leaders said.

"We do feel the administration listened carefully to the concerns of the immigrant community, and went a long way toward rectifying some of the errors that were made in the earlier proposals," London said.

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TRANSMISSION RECORD

ORIGINAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
425 I STREET NW, SUITE 7100
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20536

DATE:

5/18

TO: <i>Irene Bueno</i>	FROM: <i>Cathy St. Denis</i>
TELEPHONE:	TELEPHONE: 514-1900
FAX TELEPHONE:	FAX#: 307-9911

NUMBER OF PAGES (including cover sheet):

5 w/cover

COMMENT/MESSAGE:



National Immigration Forum

FAX MEMORANDUM

MAY 5, 1999

To: Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff, White House

Fr: Angela Kelley, National Immigration Forum

Re: Request for meeting on NACARA Section 203 Regulations

Maria:

It has been several weeks since we have talked (or left each other voice mails) on the Section 203 regulations to the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA).

Not surprisingly, we remain concerned about the language of the interim regulation as it relates to the "extreme hardship" provision of the regulation.

I understand that a final draft of the regulation, or at least the relevant portions, is completed and is moving through the clearance process. I would request a meeting with those you think appropriate and a few of my colleagues to discuss the direction of the regulation. This is a request based on the practical need of having to plan information dissemination and assist service providers once the regulation is published and our need to consider legislative alternatives.

Many thanks in advance for your response. I can be reached at 202-544-0004 #19.

*not
refer to Irene Buent
and Clara Shin - and
call him and tell
him we'll work on it*

- Rick Swartz

- Catholics - Michael
Abby

- NCLR - Joel

- NLF - Anne ~~Ann~~

Clear of speech - how updated?

what guidance + conditions

AGENDA FOR NACARA/ PARITY LEGISLATION MEETING

May 10, 1999

► REVIEW TIMELINE

- Timing - given time constraints - what is needed on 5/20 - Send to Fed Register for publication by 5/20 and say in Stockholm that the reg will be published soon that would.... and President will send legislation to *address this issue*.

► NACARA REG - comments due to OMB asap today.

- Reg - Provides rebuttal presumption for ABC Class members only and requires that they show a number of factors to prove that they qualify for a "rebuttable presumption."

- General Concerns/criticisms - Hill, groups, press

- No presumption

- Rebuttable presumption applies to ABC Class members only and the application is overly burdensome (applicants must show a variety of factors).

- Rebuttable presumption does not apply to other NACARA applicants (ie Salvadorans and Guatemalans who file asylum applications as of 4/1/90. These applicants must demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that they would experience extreme hardship if they are deported. Basically - no change for these applicants.

- Case-by-case analysis is costly and overly burdensome

- Strategy to address concerns

- 5/13 - Begin briefing key groups and key Congressional members

- DOJ needs roll-out materials (fact sheets and qs and as) that addresses each of these potential criticisms.

- Question - should State Dept. attend briefings to discuss legislation or separate issue?

- OMB

✗ - DOJ announcement of the reg - further details discussed at DOJ meeting but does the WH have any thoughts about the announcements of the reg and legislation?

► LEGISLATION

✓ - INS is drafting legislation consistent with State Dept. rationale (ie - parity for all Central Americans - Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans who have filed asylum applications as of 12/1/95 but not Haitians and Eastern Europeans). - *Guillory*

✓ - Need to decide if Haitians and Eastern Europeans are in or not - next steps for decision.

- Confirm State Dept. is introducing legislation and coordinate roll-out with them. - *Scott*

- WH Deputy level meeting? - *not needed, senior level at State Dept.* -

- DED issue? - *stand firm* *Sec should be defended.* *Scott*

nacara.tme
5/10/99; 11am

NACARA REG and PARITY LEGISLATION TIMELINE

5/10

- **Reg and Legislation** - WH meeting on reg, legislation and roll-out
- **Legislation** - Contact INS to complete drafting of legislation and transmittal letter based on State Dept. rationale
- **Reg** - Comments Due to OMB on reg - determine can any changes be made?
- **Reg** - DOJ meeting on NACARA roll-out
 - Briefings
 - Materials

5/11

- **Reg** - OMB sends comments to INS on reg
- **Legislation** - DOJ/INS send OMB and WH legislation and transmittal for clearance comments due 5/12 COB

5/12

- - **Legislation**- Comments on leg due 5/12
- **Legislation** Work with State and INS on roll-out of legislation - timing and materials
- **Reg** - INS considers comments and provides reactions to OMB to reg
- **Reg**- Further discussion, conference calls, etc. on reg

5/13

- **Reg** - INS revises reg and sends to OMB - comments due 5/13, COB
- **Legislation** - INS revises legislation and finalizes

5/14

- **Reg** - INS sends reg to Main Justice for final clearance -
- **Reg and Legislation** - Brief groups and key Hill office on reg and legislation discuss with Janet Hill discussions particularly about legislation and OPL

5/17

- **Reg** - Send to Federal Register for publication on 5/20 - if possible

5/19

Briefings on both reg and legislation

- DOJ/State - Briefings on Hill on both reg and legislation

5/20

Regulation

- Reg on display or at least sent to the Federal Register by 5/20 for publication soon thereafter?
- DOJ/INS Announcement on reg -who and where?

Legislation

- White House or State Dept. announcement on legislation?
- State Dept. Transmit legislation to the Hill - Announcement - who and where? - also will mention in Stockholm

may

main

-meeting

NACARA Reg. ~~5/10/97~~

- Want on display by ~~5/20~~
- Needs to be signed by AG on ~~5/14~~
- OLC is reviewing concurrently.

5/18 Small group meeting phone call - NAC. NIF

5/19pm Key ~~CHC~~ CHC members > phone call
(internal backup)

~~Abraham~~ (BO)
- Kennedy
- Sheikh Saleem-UK
- Roy Paul-Allah
- Gutierrez

5/20 - AM - Groups, Hill (Smith) - official briefing
PM - Press

- Hill
- Groups
- Press
- Embassies

Cathy St. Am

Commissioner speak to Ambassadors -

Lamar Smith - call AG - (Ask AG) -

- Legislation - WH will answer question on this.

- Announcement - DC + Video conferencing Hook-up in LA,

Commissioner

Members -

* Amplification ~~in~~ mty 5 in LA + training w/ NGO

- Materials + Message

• Fact Sheet/Babyd

• Press Release

• Q+A - Good

- Sensitive

> Only COB used (Marta)

Message

Over 400 comments - 95% ~~for the~~ ^{- ~~then~~ simplify the process} ~~comments~~

- Administrative effort - ~~easy~~ the process - in effort to ~~make~~ ^{make} process
- President's direction to AG - ~~look~~ ^{AG has been mindful} - ~~with~~ ^{with}
- ~~AG~~ Burden of Proof - ameliorate paper - common hardship

Change ~~AG~~
from
proposed

- Unique group of people that
- putting in the asylum process - combine aspect of ~~surprise~~ ^{surprise}
- advised hardship

Criticisms

- Too burdensome process - ^{good moral character not} ~~hardship~~ - yes or no
- Vague - INS officers will not ~~be~~ have enough guidance
- ~~powerful~~

- State, ~~AG~~ ^{USIA}, AID

AG Mn-ABC Class

- 10 common characteristics - help define the group
- Don't know about
- Children of ABC group ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~SDK~~ ^{will}

BILLING CODE: 4410-10

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Immigration and Naturalization Service

8 CFR Parts 103, 208, 240, 246, 274a, 299

INS No. 1915-98; AG Order No.

RIN 1115-AF14

**Suspension of Deportation and Special Rule Cancellation of Removal for Certain Nationals
of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Former Soviet Bloc Countries**

AGENCY: Immigration and Naturalization Service and Executive Office for Immigration Review, Justice.

ACTION: Interim rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This rule implements section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). It amends the Department of Justice (Department) regulations by offering certain beneficiaries of section 203 of NACARA who currently have asylum applications pending with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Service), and their qualified dependents, the option of applying to the Service for suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under the statutory requirements set forth in NACARA ("special rule cancellation of removal").

Described in very general terms, both suspension of deportation and special rule

1B
From Stuart
5/4/99

National Immigration Forum

Fax Cover Page

Date March 18, 1999

TO: J. Peter Gurnea

Of: DPC - White House

Fr: Angela Kelley

Re: _____

Total number of pages INCLUDING this page: 10

Per your call. Please note the
Memo to Paul Virtue sent today!

Thanks!

Angie

National Immigration Forum

FAX MEMORANDUM

March 18, 1999

To: Paul Virtue, INS General Counsel

Fr: *AK* Angela Kelley, National Immigration Forum

Re: Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act

On March 12th I sent you a memo sharing the thoughts of the Forum's Central American Working Group on the extreme hardship requirement as proposed in the November 1998 regulation on section 203 of NACARA. I have been asked by my colleagues to amplify on a few points.

In the memo we make it clear that if an individualized showing of extreme hardship is required, the requirement should be satisfied if the applicant establishes that s/he is either a member of the ABC class or filed an asylum application on or before April 1, 1990. Any approach that requires an individual to submit additional evidence of extreme hardship cannot fairly be called a "presumption" and would negate the intended benefit of reducing the burden on both the applicant and the adjudicator.

We did however offer in the March 12th memo a number of factors that by proving any one should be sufficient to establish a showing of extreme hardship. We want to clarify that though the list referenced the applicant, in fact showing of one of these factors can apply to either the applicant or the applicant's U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse, child or parent.

In addition, the list should have made clear that the inability to find adequate employment and housing should be considered as a factor in establishing extreme hardship.

A final point deserving amplification concerns the guidance to INS trial attorneys and immigration judges. To make meaningful any type of presumption there must be guidance that is binding on the INS and EOIR. The guidance should reaffirm that most of the designated NACARA applicants qualify for this presumption, which should only be challenged where there is affirmative evidence that neither the applicant nor any covered family members would suffer extreme hardship if repatriated in the circumstances specified in the March 12th memo.

Thank you for your consideration of these additional points. I look forward to speaking with you in the near future.

National Immigration Forum

FAX MEMORANDUM
MARCH 12, 1999

To: Paul Virtue, INS General Counsel

Fr: ~~Angela~~ Angela Kelley on behalf of the Central American Working Group of the National Immigration Forum

Re: Section 203 of NACARA and the extreme hardship requirement

I am writing to share recent thinking on the extreme hardship requirement as proposed in the November 1998 regulation on section 203 NACARA.

As you are aware from our comment, and the comments of many of my colleagues, we are of the view that it is within the Attorney General's legal authority to grant a group-specific determination of extreme hardship for Salvadorans and Guatemalans who are class members in the NACARA legislation. We were pleased to read President Clinton's comments in Central America yesterday where, when discussing what he can do about the unequal treatment in the law, he noted that he could use, "to the maximum extent possible, whatever flexibility I have under present law to achieve the same goal. I will do that." See attached.

In addition to being legally permissible, we believe that the class shares many hardship factors warranting such a determination, and that the recent hurricane in the region only strengthens our argument. Among that factors shared by the group are: current adverse conditions in the countries of repatriation; inability to obtain employment in the countries of repatriation; immigration history, including authorized residence in the United States; the absence of other immediately available means of adjusting to permanent resident status and; length of residence in the United States. In support of this point, I am attaching a *Washington Post* article from Sunday, March 7th, that in part reports on the conditions in El Salvador including high levels of unemployment and violence.

We understand that a rebuttable presumption for the ABC class only is under active consideration by the Department of Justice and INS. There are at least three important issues related to a rebuttable presumption that we address below: 1) who is covered by the rebuttable presumption; 2) if an individualized showing is required, how do class members meet it; and 3) under what conditions is the presumption rebutted.

It is our view that the same factors warranting a presumption of hardship for ABC class members are shared by Salvadorans and Guatemalans eligible for NACARA based on the filing of an asylum claim on or before April 1, 1990. These asylum applicants suffered the same discrimination as the ABC class members in the treatment of their asylum claims and will suffer the same hardship if deported. The only distinction is that these NACARA applicants did not meet the technical requirements for ABC registration. They should not be treated differently because of a technicality. They came to the U.S. in the same years, have built their lives here, and would return to the same conditions as those in the ABC

class. We thus propose applying the presumption rule to all NACARA applicants from El Salvador and Guatemala.

who

As to the second issue, we believe that an individualized showing of extreme hardship is sufficient if the applicant proves her membership in the ABC class ~~or that she filed an application for asylum on or before April 1, 1990.~~ It would be consistent with the statute's legislative history for the regulations to "minimize the burden" on applicants (most of whom will be unrepresented) in their showing of extreme hardship.

If an additional showing is required, we would suggest that applicants have to prove only one of the following characteristics. Upon a showing of the existence of any one of these factors in regard to the alien or the alien's U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse, child, or parent, a showing of extreme hardship would be considered to have been made. The factors are:

1. The alien's significant loss of income in the country to which the alien would be returned;
2. The alien's loss of access to health care, including but not limited to emergency health care, in the country to which the alien would be returned;
3. The alien's loss of educational opportunities in the country to which the alien would be returned;
4. The alien's separation from family;
5. The alien's loss of significant community ties;
6. The alien's history of sending remittances to family members in El Salvador or Guatemala;
7. The alien's membership in an indigenous ethnic group that has suffered persecution;
8. The alien's past support of family members (within and/or outside of the United States) and inability to continue to provide such support in the country to which the alien would be returned;
9. The alien is or has been a victim of domestic violence;
10. The alien will suffer significant psychological harm if forced to live in the country to which the alien will be returned;
11. The alien has provided special assistance to a community in the United States;
12. The alien has a disability or suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder;
13. The alien will be at substantially greater risk of being a victim of violent crime in the country to which the alien will be returned;

14. The alien has suffered emotional and psychological hardship due to threats of violence or actual violence in his or her native country during the war;
15. The alien's inability to return to her or his home, community or way of life in his or her country owing to displacement caused by bombings, lack of access to arable land or other war-related conditions.
16. The alien's inability to return to his or her home community or way of life owing to flood, hurricane, earthquake or other environmental disaster.

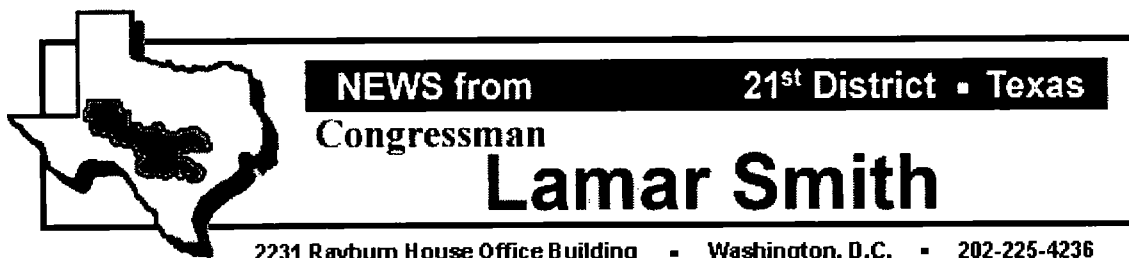
If this approach is adopted, we urge you to make it clear that applicants must only establish their membership in the ABC class or that they filed an asylum application by April, 1990 and one other characteristic. This requirement must be carefully set forth in guidance to both INA trial attorneys and to Immigration Judges.

Upon establishing that the applicant is in fact a member of the class protected by the legislation, we urge you to adopt guidance instructing the government to rebut the presumption in only a handful of situations where despite the clear presence of membership in the ABC class or asylum application filing, there is reason to believe the person will not suffer hardship. We believe this situation would only apply those who:

1. are independently wealthy to such a degree that they would not suffer any adverse effect by being deported to their native country; or
2. have not established any ties to the U.S. by: not having a regular work history (or not attending school or working in the home to care for family members); not sending remittances to their home country and; not having any family in the US and being in good physical and mental health. (The absence of all these factors would have to be demonstrated to justify a rebuttal); or
3. have a record of repeated civil or criminal convictions.

In cases where the presumption will be rebutted, we would request that applicants be given notice that they will not receive the benefit of the presumption to permit them time to prepare a more detailed and specific hardship case. We would also request that notice of the rebuttals specify the evidence that is the basis of the rebuttal.

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future on the status of the final rule. Please feel free to contact me at (202) 544-0004 ext. #19 at your earliest convenience.



Smith Anticipates Clinton Administration Amnesty

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
20, 1999

May

Statement in anticipation of a Clinton Administration decision to turn the NACARA law into an amnesty:

"From all indications, the Clinton Administration is planning to turn the NACARA law into an amnesty for hundreds of thousands of Central Americans. That's not what Congress intended and it breaks the Administration's word to the American people.

"Amnesty rewards those who break the law and encourages more illegal immigration. It is a slap in the face to all those who patiently waited their turn to come to the U.S.

"Immigrants should be treated fairly. Setting different rules for those from different countries is unfair and an insult to other immigrants."

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Committee on the Judiciary, Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims * Chairman, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct * Committee on Science

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