

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

PHONE: 395-4790 / FAX: 395-3729

TO: Irene Bueno

DATE:

FROM:

___ CHUCK KIEFFER

___ CHUCK KONIGSBERG

___ ELIZABETH GORE

___ SANDRA YAMIN

___ NANCY BRANDEL

X LISA ZWEIG

___ BRIAN MASON

Comments:

Walsh letter

FAX #:

6-5581

PAGES:

3

PHONE NUMBER:

(includes cover page)

AD/LM



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

June 16, 1999

The Honorable James T. Walsh
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Walsh:

Thank you for your letter to the President on the implementation of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Act. I am responding on his behalf.

This Administration is committed to supporting lasting peace in Northern Ireland and assisting its transition to a peacetime economy. The President has demonstrated this support through his direct role in the peace process and consistent promotion of programs and activities that foster, and seek to fortify, peace in the region. When the President signed the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Act of 1998, he once more reiterated his commitment.

As you noted in your letter, many in the Administration have worked together to develop the three-year program established by the Act to provide 4,000 men and women from the region with skills that can foster a strong peacetime economy. Be assured that the Administration will make available adequate resources to implement fully this important program. We are actively reviewing funding options that will expedite initial program implementation.

Again, thank you for your letter. The Administration looks forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob J. Lew", is written over a horizontal line.

Jacob J. Lew
Director

300852

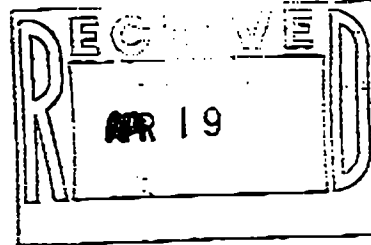
1240
James T. Walsh
25th District New York



*U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.*

April 12, 1999

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500



APR 19 1999

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to follow up on our St. Patrick's Day lunch discussion and your offer of assistance in securing funding for the implementation of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998. Given the current stalemate and recent murders in Northern Ireland, now more than ever a confidence-building measure from the United States is needed to ensure full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Public Law 105-319 created a three-year program with 4,000 non-immigrant visas available each year targeting young men and women from both communities in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. It aims to assist the region in its transition to a peacetime economy by providing those individuals an opportunity to obtain valuable job skills and return home with the skills necessary to attract private investment to their local economies.

Pat Nelson, Kitty Higgins, Jim Lyons and many others in your Administration have done a great deal of work developing a comprehensive program that can be executed very quickly. The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill is an opportunity to both fund the program and send a strong message of our support for a new Northern Ireland.

In the Irish-American community there is a great deal of interest in the Visa and support for lasting peace in Northern Ireland. Your leadership on this issue has brought about remarkable progress that none would have thought possible before your presidency.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

James T. Walsh
James T. Walsh
Chairman
Friends of Ireland

Stu 99
Am - whole act

56212

Per Lisa Zwerg - 5-9-135

Not FY2000 budget, ~~at~~ Supplemental
Working w/ the State Dept. \$800K

~~Don't~~ ~~Sta~~

NSC really pushing, so OMB started looking
letter to Walsh - committed to the
Eco Support Fund - will fund

Not public - spoke ~~to~~ to Condi + they are ok
Condi reprogramming

Roll-out - Rodney Burt - State Dept. career person -
NSC Larry Butler - Miller lacking -

Lead on Roll-out?

Pat
State Dept. - looking for money. We are working on it and we are
positive. Reprogramming - OMB. Lisa Bowers
Visa moved toward calendar year - Oct.

Irene Bueno

06/09/99 02:14:05 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Christine A. Stanek/WHO/EOP@EOP
CC:
bcc: Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP@EOP, Records Management@EOP
Subject: Re: Walsh Visa 

I spoke with Ed Odom of the State Dept. and he is aware of the Walsh program but another person, Pat Nelson-Douvelis is the point person on this issue. Pat is on vacation and she will return on 6/21.

Ed's understanding - based on e-mail he received from Pat - was that Rep. Walsh spoke with the President during a St. Patrick's event and thought he had a commitment from the President to seek funding for the Walsh Visa program but Walsh claims the President did not follow up on this commitment and made a press statement to this effect. On 5/26, Pat sent a e-mail to Ed explaining that Walsh somehow secured funding for FY 1999 and FY 2000 for this program. However, we are not sure how this funding was secured. Attached is a press release from Rep. Walsh on this issue on 5/13 but not a recent one indicating that he secured the funding. Have you received calls on this issue recently? Let me know. I can also follow up with OMB.

If there are other programatic issues (as your fax to me indicates), I would suggest that you or they contact Pat Nelson-Douvelis directly. If there continues to be problems in this area, let me know and I will try to help.

Thanks for your patience.

647-~~1234~~
6585 647-3463



walsh.doc

Christine A. Stanek



Christine A. Stanek

05/26/99 05:19:55 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc:
bcc:
Subject: Re: Walsh Visa 

This is also called the "Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Act of 1998" sponsored by Congressman Walsh and passed in the House last fall. Does that help at all?

Irene Bueno

Irene Bueno



05/26/99 02:27:18 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Christine A. Stanek/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: Walsh Visa

My contact at INS was not sure what about the Walsh Visas? Can you send me some info? I'm in 217 OEOB. Thanks.

----- Forwarded by Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP on 05/26/99 02:26 PM -----



Cathy.St.Denis @ usdoj.gov

05/25/99 08:53:00 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: Walsh Visa

Irene -- I have no idea what or who this is. If you can get more info from whoever this is who sent it to you, I'll try and get more info

Reply Separator

Subject: Walsh Visa

Author: ibueno@oa.eop.gov_at_inetgw2 at wtgate

Date: 5/24/99 9:03 PM

Do you know anything about this issue? See note below. We can deal with it when I get back Wednesday afternoon.

Thanks for everything!!! You and the entire INS team has been great.

----- Forwarded by Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP on 05/24/99 09:01 PM -----

Christine A. Stanek
05/24/99 07:22:50 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP

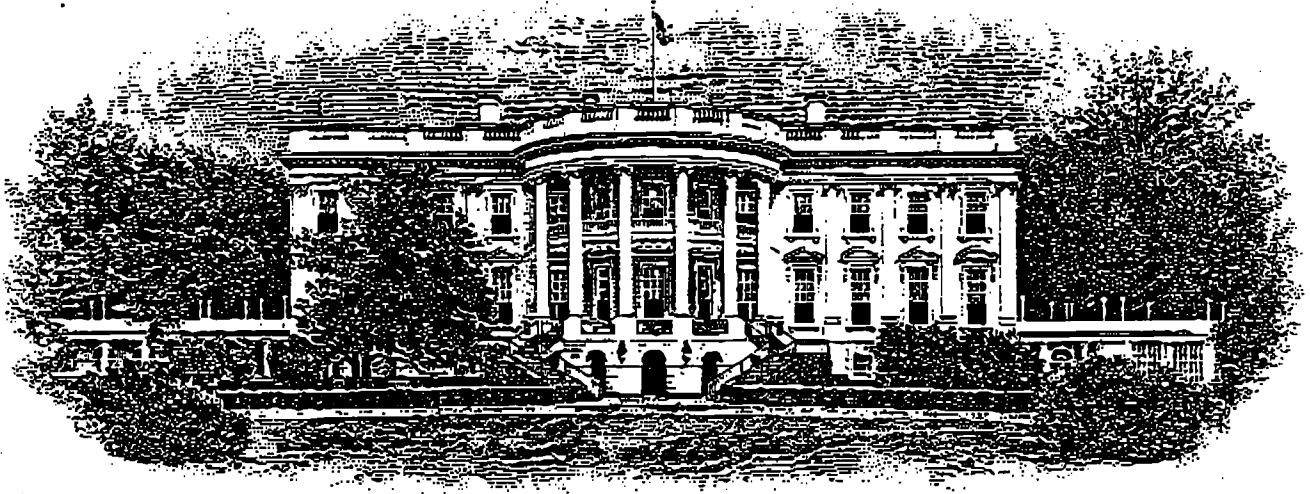
cc:

Subject: Walsh Visa

Irene:

I am starting to get calls from the Irish community about the Walsh visa - lack of funding in the current fiscal year and no allocation for the next fiscal year. I am little unclear about the specifics on this but would appreciate any guidance or insight you might have. Walsh is making statements to the press and I am beginning to get questioning calls from one of the President's most supportive communities. thanks.

Christine
x66614



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: June 9, 1999
TO: Elrene Buene
FROM: Christine Stanek, Associate Director
Office of Public Liaison
(202)456-2930 fax: (202)456-6218
RE:
FAX NUMBER: 6-5581

If you do not receive 3 pages including the cover page, please call (202)456-2930.

Elrene:

Some basic info. Unfortunately, I was on a leave of absence when this legislation was passed in the fall so I am not completely informed on this.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brian O'Dwyer
FROM: Eamonn Dornan
DATE: 05/20/99
RE: Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Act of 1998
a.k.a. The "Walsh visa program"

1) No monies have been appropriated in FY 1999 for the implementation of the program and the contractor will need to do a fair amount of preliminary work before the first visa can be issued. Rep. Walsh is presently consulting with Commerce, State and Justice to secure funding for FY 2000. However if there is no funding for FY 1999 we will experience inordinate delays as the program needs interim funding to ensure an October start-up date.

2) The *draft* DOS proposals as we understand them are unduly restrictive and highly impractical. In particular, DOS methodology proposes that the beneficiary should have interviewed with a company to obtain a firm job offer before he or she arrives in the U.S., either via teleconferencing, via Internet, by proxy, or by making it obligatory on US employers to travel to Ireland to interview candidates. From our extensive experience with immigrants to the US, Irish and otherwise, we know this cannot work in practice. Employers need face-to-face interviews with prospective candidates, and there is no financial or other incentive for employers to go to the expense of teleconferencing or travel to Ireland to recruit people under this program.

We advise that the best means to achieve a harmonious match between employer/employee is to allow greater flexibility. A standard letter offering employment, such as was used to obtain "Morrison" or "Schumer" visas, should be sufficient at the outset. When the beneficiary arrives in the U.S., the Contractor can then help to ensure that the placement is mutually beneficial. If not, the applicant should be free, with the Contractor's assistance, to take up employment elsewhere.

3) We understand that the duties and responsibilities for the implementation of the program in the North and Border Counties will be managed by the statutory bodies, such as the Training and Employment Agency (N. Ireland) and FAS (Ireland), as well as a subcontracting agency. We envisage the break-up to reflect the following:

1. Advertising and marketing - FAS and Training and Employment Agency
2. Application package - Subcontractor
3. Application screening - Subcontractor
4. Application selection - Subcontractor
5. Pre-departure Orientation - Subcontractor

We believe the Contractor should be in a position to nominate a subcontractor which it can work with, rather than an appointment being made by DOS or the Irish or British Governments

4) The US Contractor will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Walsh visa program. The contractors' duties and responsibilities break down into a number of major areas:

- 1) Visa approvals and issuance
- 2) Job placement, solicitation and recruitment
- 3) Orientations, accommodation and transport
- 4) Registration, tracking and follow-up of applicants
- 5) Liaison and reporting to US, Irish, NI government agencies
- 6) Liaison with program officers in designated cities.

The US Contractor will require between 3 – 6 months lead-in time to prepare the above and to establish liaison with the subcontractor. Again it is essential that some start-up monies are made available to begin preliminary organization.

In summation, we believe the program needs support from the President for immediate funding and a liberal employment methodology, thereby placing more trust and responsibility in the collective resources of the beneficiary, the Contractor and of EIIIC and our sister immigrant advice centers across the U.S.



CNY Congress Link



May 13, 1999

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

CONTACT: Jim O'Connor at (315) 423-5657

WALSH SAYS ADMINISTRATION MISSING OPPORTUNITIES TO FUND PEACE VISA

WASHINGTON-- Congressman James Walsh today said he is disappointed that the Administration's commitment to fund a visa program associated with the Northern Ireland Peace Agreement has withered and the White House now appears unwilling to provide the relatively small amount of money needed to enact the legislation he signed last year.

Walsh, who is Chairman of the Friends of Ireland and Co-Chair of the U.S.-Irish Inter-parliamentary Caucus, said the bill passed Congress and was signed by President Clinton late last year. It was not passed in time for the needed \$800,000 to be included in the 1999 fiscal year appropriations.

Walsh said he had been hopeful the White House would ask the Office of Management and Budget to find a way to fund the visa for this year, as he has done when assisting other countries.

The President requested the following amounts in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriation, which is expected to be passed by Congress: \$687 million for Central America and Columbia; \$100 million for Jordan; \$6.5 million for East Timor; \$819 million for Kosovo and Albania, more than \$1 billion to support the Middle East peace plan.

"I would think that less than \$1 million for a bill which has been signed into law, and which directly relates to peace in a world trouble spot for decades, would be manageable", Walsh said.

The law would allow up to 4,000 Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland and the border counties in the Republic to come to the U.S. to learn a trade from private sector employers and then return to their homeland to pursue prosperity and embrace the kind of tolerance on which the Peace Agreement is based.

"I spoke with the President during the St. Patrick's Day celebration", Walsh said, "and I also met with his Labor and State Department representatives. The funding remains unbudgeted and I am disappointed at this missed opportunity".

Walsh said it was ironic that the President and the First Lady on the same day missed opportunities related to this initiative, the only demonstration of support by the U.S. government for the Irish Peace Plan.

"First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was to be asked by interested Northern Ireland parties about the Walsh Visa on her visit to Belfast today", Walsh said. "It would have been an ideal time, at an important juncture in continuing negotiations in Northern Ireland for the First Lady to announce that the visas would indeed be funded, as was promised", Walsh said. At literally the same time, President Clinton missed an opportunity to include the funding in the emergency supplemental appropriation.

END

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Web Design: Kimberly Kemp and Andrew Bobrek.