

NLWJC - Kagan

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Immigration - Las Vegas

Immigrants

Immig - Las Vegas immigrants

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To: Maria Echaveste/WHO/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
cc: Leslie Bernstein/WHO/EOP, Marjorie Tarmey/WHO/EOP, Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP
Subject: Late Amnesty and Las Vegas

Maria/Elena,

Last Thursday, I met with a group of advocates from Las Vegas. According to them, there are approximately 27,000 immigrants in the Las Vegas area who were issued fraudulent work authorizations by the INS between 1989 and 1991. The INS began notifying this group in 1996 that their documentation was fraudulently obtained and that they need to come forward to assert the legitimate basis for having work authorization (which would include being a prima facie member of one of the "late amnesty" classes). Otherwise, their authorization was to be revoked.

It is likely that some who obtained fraudulent work authorizations thought that they were undergoing a legitimate process and perhaps even claimed (to the notario or lawyer involved) that they were eligible for "late amnesty." However, all of the authorizations were fraudulently obtained. Only those who can demonstrate a legitimate basis for obtaining the authorization (e.g., had a legitimate "late amnesty" claim) will have their work papers renewed -- a very small number.

The only problem is the equities that many of these immigrants have built up over eight or nine years. They have lived and worked in the U.S.; bought homes; paid taxes; etc. It is going to be a significant hardship for many of them to have to return home. However, I don't think that we want to be in a position of rewarding fraud.

The advocates for these folks have been making the rounds. They spoke with the VP when he was in Las Vegas some weeks ago (his office is interested in what has been going on); have involved the AFL-CIO (some of those with fraudulent documents are union members); have contacted the INS; the Office of Special Counsel at Justice and even Secretary Richardson (whose office called here to inquire about the situation).

I will keep you posted on any further developments.

julie