

UNCLASSIFIED 15 STATE 112906

SEP 28 2015

SUBJECT: Expiration of Non-Minister Special Immigrant Religious Workers and Conrad 30 Visa Program Authorities

1. Summary: On September 30, 2015, two immigration programs are set to expire and will no longer be valid: (1) the non-minister special immigrant religious worker program and (2) the Conrad 30 waiver program. The expiration also applies to accompanying spouses and children. End Summary.

Non-Minister Special Immigrant Religious Workers Program

2. Authorization for the non-minister special immigrant religious worker program (SR visa) will expire on September 30, 2015. The two categories of special immigrant religious workers that will expire are the professional and non-professional workers within a religious vocation or occupation categories. This expiration relates to immigrant visas only and does not include any nonimmigrant classes, such as R-1 visas. The expiration date also applies to accompanying spouses and children. An individual seeking status as a non-minister special immigrant is required to have applied for, and be admitted, into the United States in such status prior to September 30, 2015. Therefore, the validity of any SR visa issued must be limited to September 29, 2015, to coincide with the expiration of this classification. Posts that have issued SR visas in recent months should make efforts to inform the recipients that they must travel by September 29, 2015. When issuing an SR visa, the visa validity period must be limited to September 29, 2015. The expiration applies to "SR" class cases only, and not "SD" ministers of religion, who are a permanent visa class that will not be expiring on September 30, 2015.

Conrad 30 Waiver Program.

3. The Conrad 30 waiver program will expire on October 1, 2015. The Conrad 30 waiver program, also known as the Conrad State 30 program, allows medical doctors on J-1 visas to apply for a waiver for the two-year residence requirement upon completion of the J-1 exchange visitor program. The program addresses the shortage of qualified doctors in medically underserved areas. The Waiver Review Division will cease processing Conrad 30 waivers for J-1 physicians who entered or were granted J-1 status after September 30, 2015. Applicants that entered or were granted J-1 status on or before September 30, 2015, may still apply for a waiver.

4. Congress is considering extensions for both programs; however, there is no certainty that such legislative action will occur before each respective expiration date.

5. If Congress does not extend these programs, the Foreign Affairs Manual will be amended to reflect the expiration of these programs and any procedures for petitions approved before the expiration dates.

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