

May 17, 2015

Re: I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Honorable Senator XXXXXXXX:

I am a citizen of the State of XXXXXXX that currently has a Form I-129F, Petition for Alien Fiancée, (I-129F) currently under review at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Texas Service Center (TSC). I received a Notice of Action #1 (NOA1) dated March 17, 2015 from the USCIS, along with an indication that my petition was routed to the TSC. On March 24, 2015, a case update was made to my record, SRC15902XXXX, but I have been unable to access the nature of this update, nor have I had any success in receiving any assistance from live agents at USCIS. I spoke with a customer service representative of the USCIS last week, who acknowledged the system error, but rather than provide any further assistance, immediately started reading a script that informed me that when USCIS has an update I will receive further information. The dialogue was a black hole for someone seeking answers. The agent did indicate that the TSC was reviewing cases received for the week of August 23, 2014, which does not seem plausible as this date has been on the USCIS processing time webpage since I filed my I-129F seven weeks ago.

I am a member of VisaJourney.com, a website forum where immigrant petitioners share their stories, frustrations and timelines with respect to applications at the USCIS. It is very clear from the postings on this website that I-129F petitions processed at the California Processing Center ("CSC") are being approved in less than six weeks, while those at the TSC are sitting for six months or more. I am not seeking to force myself to the front of the line, but the disparity in processing times is inequitable to U.S. citizens, including your constituents in the state of XXXXX that have applications pending at the TSC. I appreciate the diligence of the agents at the USCIS in reviewing applications, but find it incomprehensible that caseloads at one office differ so significantly from the other in terms of timelines. Because I live in XXXXXXXXX, I am prejudiced by the lack of transparency and availability of information, and inequity in approval times.

I am petitioning to bring my fiancée, XXXX and her 7-year old son to the United States from the Dominican Republic. I am my fiancée's sole means of financial support, for housing, food, clothing, medical care, and education for her child. I have been to the Dominican Republic eighteen times since we met in June 2014, and my I-129F, and its accompanying exhibits, more than evidence the sincerity of my intent. At the same time I support my beneficiary, I pay alimony to my ex-spouse and my three wonderful children, who live in the State of New Jersey. Given my financial burdens, I am simply seeking an equitable timeline to a NOA-2 approval, and attempting to avoid a situation where I am unable to financially honor my obligations should this adjudication process continue to linger unnecessarily.

As a member of the Subcommittee on Immigration and The National Interest, I value your vital role in protecting our national security and ensuring the safety and integrity of our borders. I am hopeful, and would be most thankful, if you could provide assistance to me with my application. Simply knowing what happened on March 24<sup>th</sup> would be helpful, but having your advocacy on behalf of the I-129F petitioners in the State of XXXXXXXXX, whose applications are mired in delays at the TSC would be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for your time,

RMS

July 7, 2015

Re: I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Honorable Senator XXXXXX:

This is my second letter to you that describes my incredible disappointment at the speed with which the USCIS office in Texas is processing petitions for immigrant fiancée visas. As of today, I-129F petitions received during the first week of December 2014 are only now being reviewed at the Texas Service Center. Conversely, petitions sent the last week of May 2015 to the California Service Center are being adjudicated. My petition was filed with the USCIS in March 2015, which, based on current timetables, projects that my file will not be adjudicated until November 2015. What this translates into is the reality that applicants that filed more than two months after I, but were fortunate to have their cases routed to California, are already progressing through the immigration process, while I am mired in a delay at a service center that seems unable to keep up with its workload. The inequity in processing times is reprehensible and unfair to citizens whose files are sent to Texas based on their state of residency. The USCIS suggests a five month window for a NOA2 notice to be sent with regards to a Form 129F application, yet it is processing approvals in California within a window of six weeks, while in Texas that window is seven months.

I feel penalized by the fact that I live in XXXXXXXXX and you, as our senator, should feel equally as disturbed that your constituents suffer. I am not sure the priority given to applications in Texas, but the specter of continuing to wait and wait, while others have stepped in front of me solely because they are domiciled in a state where petitions are sent to California is, in its most basic sense, just unfair. I am not looking for preferential treatment, rather I simply want my petition reviewed and approved timely. Others have waited longer than me, but as I approach the completion of my fourth month of waiting, I am extremely frustrated at the statistics published by the USCIS for its wait times.

Senator, my petition is sincere and the evidence to support my application is iron clad. Please put yourself into my shoes and consider how you would feel if you were paralyzed by the inability to influence a process, one that has others prioritized in front of you based on where they live. While I continue to support my fiancée who does not work, I do so at the same time as supporting an ex-spouse and my three children. The financial burden that I carry each month only worsens as this process continues to drag.

Any help or relief that you can provide would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

RMS

July 13, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison for the State of XXXXXXXXX:

Thank you for your reply. The processing times on the USCIS.com website are estimated windows for adjudication dates and are not actual processing dates. I receive daily email from a subscriber-based website that reports daily performance progress at the TSC, and further review data reported by members of VisaJourney.com. The CSC is reviewing applications received the last week of May 2015, while the TSC is reviewing petitions received the second week of December 2014. A member of VisaJourney.com with whom I spoke, met with US Representative XXXXXX's Chief of Staff, Ms. XXXXXX, who contacted the TSC. Officials at the TSC readily acknowledged the delays, and offered no guidance or reason for the delays.

I am a citizen of XXXXXXXXX, and I am prejudiced in the timing of my adjudication solely because I live in this state, and not in a state with cases that are assigned to California. As chairman of the subcommittee on Immigration and National Interest, Senator XXXXXXXXX should be concerned that his constituents' applications are sitting and collecting dust, while our immigrant loved ones wait for approval to enter the United States fairly and legally. It is unfathomable to me that readily accessible data on the internet evidences the disparity in processing times, yet no accountability exists to remedy this unbelievable national issue. As I voiced to Senator XXXXXXXXX in my letter, I support both my current fiancée, her son, an ex-spouse and my three beautiful children. I support two families and gain no tax benefit afforded married couples for doing so, because I have no pathway to bring my fiancée to our country. The burden is financially overwhelming, as I face difficult decisions such as college tuition for my oldest child. I should never have to face a decision that adversely affects any of my family members, but I face this reality because my file is in Texas.

I have attached a screen shot from VisaJourney.com that projects the timing that the service centers are performing under. I will continue to email you weekly until my file is fairly adjudicated, as I believe it is important that my voice be heard until a resolution is reached. I deeply appreciate your response, but I am fairly certain that if you were in my shoes you would do the same. I am advocating for equal, not preferential treatment, and I simply cannot accept that my file must sit in limbo in Texas, when it would have been approved already in California.

Thank you for your advocacy and for appreciating my concern.

RMS

July 19, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison for the State of XXXXXXXXX:

I truly appreciate your taking time to assist me and other citizens of XXXXXXXXX with our fiancée visa petitions under review at the Texas Service Center of the USCIS. The issue that many of us are having is that the TSC is several months behind, and little is being done to ask the logical question of why the delays happened, and what is being done to help relieve the backlog. I knew when I sought your assistance on my case that the USCIS would offer you nothing other than confirming that my file in process. This type of response is one that the USCIS gives to every elected official that makes an inquiry on behalf of a constituent. What I am interested in are answers as to why a friend why a US citizen's application went to the California Center in mid-May has already been approved, while my petition is now in the queue for four months in Texas. I do not want to keep being told that my file is within the window of time for processing when so many other petitions received after mine have already been approved.

I am persistent in my reaching out to you, because I care deeply about my immigrant fiancée, and the burden that I carry financially of supporting seven people, including myself, is overwhelming. I know that Senator XXXXXXXXX is an influential official in Washington, DC when it comes to concerns about immigration, and I am hoping this influence can be used in at least making additional inquiries on my behalf as to the delays. I am fully aware that as soon as I call the USCIS on my five month anniversary (which will be mid-August) I will be read a pre-written explanation that will be no more informative than the information you were provided a few weeks ago. As I said in my first correspondence, I do not deserve to be languishing in the Texas Service Center because I chose to live in XXXXXXXXX.

I am not going to flood you with statistics at this point as I am sure you understand that I am not making false claims about the delays. I have never taken up to writing to my government representatives until now, but this issue affects me so deeply that I feel I have nowhere else to turn. I feel like my next steps are to travel to both Washington and to Hartford to plea my case in person. Please, I know that you have already made a call on my behalf. I am simply asking that another call be made, one that seeks answers as to the issues so I have some hope that this will end soon in my favor.

Thank you again.

RMS

July 23, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison:

I am following up on your last correspondence where you indicated that you were contacting the congressional contact at the TSC? There is literally nothing I would not do to wake up tomorrow and receive my approval. As I have shared with you before, I am a member of VisaJourney.com. A fellow member on the site posted a message today that his petition for a spousal visa was approved by the USCIS. His application was received at the Lewisville, TX lockbox (the USCIS Office of Intake and Document Production) on June 23 and approved on July 21. From the time his petition was received at the lockbox, routed to the California Service Center in Laguna Niguel, CA (1,433 miles from Lewisville, TX), processed, reviewed and approved, this petitioner waited only thirty days, of which one was the Independence Day national holiday.

If there was talk about workload reallocation between the two service centers, it certainly is not happening. I pay for and receive a daily progress report that details the movements of visa petitions at the Texas TSC, and clearly can see that the TSC is still trending at more than 200 days for approval of I-129F petitions. The disparity of 30 days (in California) versus 200 days (in Texas) is so heart breaking for me right now to see. I keep asking myself, what would you do if you were in my shoes? It is an incredibly painful and helpless feeling. I do not mean to complain, but I feel obliged to share with you so that you can share with others what is happening.

Thank you for your advocacy, and for helping me in any way possible.

Sincerely,

RMS

July 23, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison:

I wanted to follow-up today as your last correspondence indicated that the service centers asked for 7-10 days to respond to your inquiry, which was sent on June 21.

Thank you again for everything you have and are able to do for me and those petitioners being serviced out of Texas that are waiting on approvals, while friends in California are already bringing their loved ones to the United States.

Have a pleasant weekend.

RMS

August 4, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison:

Thank you, sincerely, for your ongoing assistance and responses. It would be much easier for you to ignore my correspondence, and while I know can be annoying, I appreciate the time you have spent on my behalf. It is simply too easy for an official to say that they do not have authority, to make a decision or place a phone call. The USCIS is still a government agency and there is a level of accountability it should have. It is now August 2015, yet the Texas Service Center is still looking at K-1 visa petitions filed as far back as December 2014. The data that I see should make anyone with a heart extremely upset. As I said to you in one of my earliest correspondence, imagine how you would feel if you were in my shoes.

When an agent of the USCIS finally looks at my file, s/he will see an individual who has evidence of a genuine and loving relationship with his fiancée. My fiancée lives in a house that I purchased for us, because I committed to never letting her live in conditions less than those that she would be accustomed to here. She has health insurance that I pay for, and sends her son to private school at my insistence and cost, because nothing is more important to me than the quality of his education. In November, I put an engagement ring on her finger, and I have traveled to see my fiancée eighteen times in the last twenty four months; the USCIS only requires that I only see her once in the preceding two year period as a condition of filing. When I share my concerns, please appreciate that they are coming from someone that has truly invested in his relationship. I sit here waiting months and months for literally a few minutes of an USCIS agent's time, knowing full well the outcome.

I do not know where to turn to at this point, whether I should resign myself as to the inequity that I am being subjected to, or if I should seek out other avenues to share my concerns. The solution here is so simple, yet no one is willing to resolve it. One call to the TSC, two minutes to find a file and the fifteen minutes to review it seem so easily done, yet so elusive. I contribute to our tax system way more than I receive, and do so as that is the cost for the hard work I have invested in the success of my career. I ask little to nothing from our government other than equal rights and equal treatment. The one time I need government assistance, and I feel like I am running in a hamster wheel.

I am fairly confident that Senator XXXXXXXXX has never read any of my correspondence, as I realize that constituent liaisons are tasked with that role given the volume of communications that arrive daily. I ask that you consider sharing this email with him. I would like the Senator to know that I appreciate everything that you have done for me. I know that at any time you could (and can) simply say there is nothing more than you can do, but you do not do that. I also want to convey my sincere disappointment and frustration that I am approaching the end of my fifth month of waiting. Petitioners assigned to the California Service Center at the same time I was assigned to Texas are already bringing their immigrant fiancé(e)s to this country.

Thank you for your continued advocacy on my behalf, and for appreciating my concern.

RMS

August 6, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison:

Thank you for providing me the response from the congressional liaison to the USCIS. I will not outright accuse your contact of being dishonest, but the CSC has always processed K-1 visa petitions. The attached PDF is data from VisaJourney.com and lists dates of petitioners serviced at the CSC as far back as 2003. Additionally, attached is a JPG from the same site, which is a graphical representation of estimated timelines that individuals are waiting for their approvals at the TSC and CSC. I can provide no more clearer picture as to how incredibly upsetting this is to me than data that shows the imbalance in processing times. I feel like we have run our course insofar as influence the senator may have on my behalf.

I am sorry to sound so incredibly frustrated, but I simply want my application reviewed and approved, and can find no satisfaction at this point because my file sits in Texas. I love my fiancée more than I can ever describe, and to understand my pain is to stand in my shoes and know what this process has done to me on many levels, both personally and financially.

Thank you for your advocacy.

RMS

August 17, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liasion:

In a little under three hours, 152 days (five months) will have passed since the USCIS acknowledged receipt of my Form I-129F petition. I refer to your email to me dated July 13, 2015, where you supplied me with information both about my case with the USCIS and the processing times at the service centers. With the passing of my fifth month without an approval of my petition, I am now imploring, if not begging, Senator XXXXXXXXX to help me. Every petitioner has his or her story to tell and the pain that this unfair and unnecessary delay has imposed.

I have exhausted substantially all of my entire savings supporting two families. I live a life where all of my salary is directed towards supporting my loved ones, whose safety and well-being is more important than that of my own. The only "luxury" that I afford myself is the ability to maintain my relationship with my fiancée by flying to see her every eight weeks. My trip this Labor Day weekend will most likely be my final one, as I must now set aside my remaining funds in order to pay the associated fees and expenses that I will incur once (if it ever happens) my petition is approved. While I live this almost pauper-like life by choice, I did not chose to have my file assigned to a service center where officials lack any sense of compassion or priority for individuals burdened by wait times that absolutely do not exist at the California Service Center. I waited until the end of month five to share this information with you about my financial situation, as I had held out hope that my NOA2 would have come today.

The USCIS will not accept a case inquiry until after the sixth month of waiting; thus I have no avenue to advocate on my own behalf for another thirty days. My form I-129F (SRC15902XXXXXX) is currently sitting in a numbered box, A2069XXXXXX, at the Texas Service Center of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Attached is my I-797 Notice of Action dated March 17, 2015. Thank you to Senator XXXXXXXXX and yourself for your appreciation of my concern and advocacy on my behalf. Nothing would make me happier, and feel more relieved financially, than to be able to see my fiancée in three weeks with the knowledge that there is a pathway to an ending for us that will lead to her living here as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

RMS

September 1, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison:

On August 17th, you sent me an email that indicated you were due a response from your USCIS congressional liaison on that day. You said you would let me know as soon as you received his/her follow-up. It has been fifteen days since you corresponded with me, and thus I would like to know if there was anything substantive said. I am now on my 168th day of waiting, and have received no updated indication as to the status of my petition. If the office of Senator XXXXXXXXX can no longer advocate on my behalf, please tell me. I want to begin preparing my formal complaint to the USCIS Ombudsman, which details my case, the delay and its cause, the assistance I have sought from my senator, and the financial difficulties I have endured.

Please revert with guidance, as I need closure on this with your office so that I can plan my next steps.

Thank you,

RMS

September 8, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison:

Would you please update me as your email from last week indicated that you were due a response from your legislative contact? Additionally, if you had word with the TSC, I would be interested to know what, if any indication, they may have given you. I am now on my 175th day of waiting for a review and approval of my petition. I left my fiancée yesterday who was in tears when I had to tell her that I neither know when/if we will get this approval, let alone when/if I will be able to return to be with her again. Imagine telling your loved one what I had to share with mine yesterday.

I hope your Labor Day weekend was a pleasant one.

Sincerely,

RMS

September 9, 2015

I-129F Petition, Receipt Number SRC15902XXXX

Dear Constituent Liaison,

I guess the karma of sending one last email to you proved magical. I received my approval tonight. Now I can turn my attention to the next steps in this process. I truly appreciate everything you did for me, if nothing else, to have let me email you with such frequency. This process is not over for me, but the hardest part has finally reached a conclusion.

There are many kind and wonderful people with whom I have had the pleasure of meeting on VisaJourney.com. I am lucky to have been approved for our visa, but these individuals are no different than me and their stories no less compelling. I implore Senator XXXXXX to continue to advocate not just on behalf of the citizens of his state, but for all citizens and their deserving immigrant beneficiaries that are being affected by the delays at the TSC.

Sincerely,

RMS