

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 19, 2007

Richard A. Sloan  
Director, Regulatory Management Division  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
3rd Floor  
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Mr. Sloan,

I am writing to you concerning a situation that was brought to my attention regarding the R-1 religious worker visa. It is my understanding that there has been a proposed rule change to the definition of the requirements for the R-1 visa.

My office has been hearing from concerned religious organizations that the proposed changes to the R-1 visa requirements would unfairly impact legitimate religious organizations seeking to obtain these visas. For instance, it is my understanding that some religions have special requirements concerning workers who build their places of worship and there is some concern that these special construction workers may not qualify for R-1 visas. I am concerned that the language and definitions which have been proposed are unfair to minority religions in the U.S. and would impose a financial burden on religious organizations which they may not be able to meet.

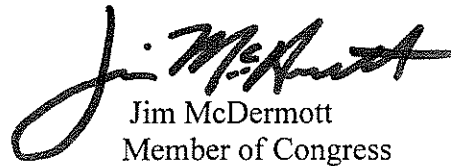
I would like to know more about the impact this will have on all religious organizations trying to obtain R-1 visas. Specifically, I am wondering:

- Has the USCIS foreseen any problems or possible misunderstandings relating to these proposed rule changes?
- Has there been any examination of the impact these rule changes will have financially on legitimate religious organizations seeking these visas?
- Has there been an effort by USCIS to reach out to religious organizations to hear feedback they might have or to set up a forum for them to voice their concerns?
- What precautions have you taken to ensure that legitimate visa applicants will not adversely be affected by the new regulations?

I hope that these concerns have been taken into consideration when formulating the proposed changes. Additionally, I hope that USCIS will continue to work with religious organizations to work through any unforeseen concerns the religious community might have.

I appreciate your consideration and response.

Sincerely,



Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress