



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

NOV 13 2017

The Honorable
Charles E. Grassley, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of October 4 regarding allegations of visa and immigration fraud that have been made against the Word of Faith Fellowship in Spindale, North Carolina. Your note reports that the Word of Faith Fellowship has misused nonimmigrant visitor and student visas and immigrant visas. Your letter also notes ongoing investigations by the State of North Carolina, the Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Attorney's office in Charlotte, North Carolina.

In July 2017, the Office of Fraud Prevention Programs (FPP) at the Department of State became aware of the allegations made against Word of Faith. FPP immediately coordinated with the U.S. Mission in Brazil, which conducted extensive research into visa applications associated with the Word of Faith. FPP shared the results of this research with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and offered to facilitate communication between ICE and the consular team in Brazil. U.S. Mission Brazil also identified and set several "watch phrases" in the visa adjudication system, which alert the Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) at the appropriate post if an applicant suspected to be affiliated with the Word of Faith fellowship applies for a visa. We are not aware of the Department receiving any communications from the Department of Justice regarding the Word of Faith Fellowship.

The issuance of B visas to volunteers is limited to those participating in voluntary service programs benefiting U.S. local communities. A "voluntary service program" is an organized project conducted by a recognized religious or nonprofit charitable organization to assist the poor or the needy or to further a religious or charitable cause. The burden that the voluntary program meets the definition of "voluntary service program" is placed upon the recognized religious or nonprofit charitable organization. Individuals traveling to the United States on B visas to take part in a voluntary service program are typically not provided information about the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (Wilberforce). Section 202(a) of Wilberforce directs the Secretary of State to "develop an information pamphlet on legal rights and resources for aliens applying for employment- or education-based nonimmigrant visas." Individuals participating in voluntary service programs do not fall within these visa classes.

The Department fully supports the intent of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, reaffirming and strengthening the U.S. government's commitment to fight human trafficking and labor abuses. A pamphlet on the provisions of

Wilberforce is available online in 43 different languages, and consular officers are instructed to provide the pamphlet to all applicants for A-3, G-5, H, or J visas, as well as to any personal or domestic servant (such as B-1 domestic or NATO-7) who is accompanying or following to join an employer. Department regulations also require consular officers to make a note in the adjudication records verifying the applicant has been made aware of their rights under Wilberforce.

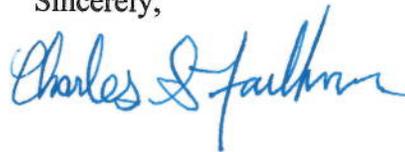
You requested statistics regarding the number of cases the Department has investigated involving potential fraud or misrepresentation from the last five fiscal years, broken down by visa category. Although the Department maintains statistics on nonimmigrant cases that are refused, our systems do not single out every case in which fraud is suspected. Most cases of simple fraud are refused by the visa adjudicator at the window under INA 214(b) with no further action. Complex cases are generally referred to Fraud Prevention Units for further investigation. In FY 2017, more than 125,000 visa cases were referred by adjudicators to FPUs at embassies and consulates worldwide. Fraud was confirmed in nearly 20 percent of them. Those fraud cases that meet the statutory requirements for misrepresentation are generally refused under INA 212(a)(6)(C)(i). Below please find statistics on refusals for misrepresentation from the annual Report of the Visa Office for the past five years:

Period	Immigrant Visas Refused under INA 212(a)(6)(C)(i)	Nonimmigrant Visas Refused under INA 212(a)(6)(C)(i)
FY 2012	7,436	12,754
FY 2013	7,079	13,911
FY 2014	5,770	16,145
FY 2015	5,718	19,177
FY 2016	6,551	19,267

While the Department does not maintain a global list of organizations involved in or suspected of visa fraud, FPUs located in embassies and consulates abroad maintain that type of information, routinely share it with other consular sections, and regularly report on trends to the Office of Fraud Prevention Programs (FPP) in Washington. FPUs continuously compile information regarding fraud trends and potential fraud indicators in their areas of responsibility. The information is used to screen visa applications and shared with adjudicating officers for training purposes. This information is stored in a variety of ways, including via a system of notifications in the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD). Additionally, FPP regularly provides updated information on regional or global fraud trends to FPUs in affected embassies and consulates.

We hope this information is responsive to your concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact us further should you require additional information on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,



Charles S. Faulkner
Bureau of Legislative Affairs