

Law Offices
Gibbs Houston Pauw
1000 Second Avenue Suite 1600
Seattle WA 98104
(206) 682-1080
FAX (206) 689 2270
www.ghp-law.net

Robert H. Gibbs
Robert Pauw

Neha Chandola
Mari Matsumoto
Lori Walls

June 2, 2008

**COURT GRANTS PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO SETTLEMENT
AGREEMENT IN LONG-RUNNING AMNESTY LITIGATION**

A federal district court judge at Seattle has granted preliminary approval to settlement of a national class action lawsuit begun over twenty years ago. The litigation, formerly known as *Immigrant Assistance Project v. INS ("IAP")*, is now known as *Northwest Immigrant Rights Project v. USCIS ("NWIRP")*, Case No. 88-379 (W.D. Wash.). The lawsuit challenges the policy of Citizenship and Immigration Services ("CIS") to deny legalization applications for failure to meet the "known to the Government" requirement. The court set July 15, 2008 as the date for receipt of any objections to the settlement, after which time the court will conduct a fairness hearing to approve or reject the settlement.

The class is defined to include individuals who entered the United States on a non-immigrant visa prior to January 1, 1982 and who are otherwise eligible for legalization under INA §245A, 8 U.S.C. §1255a. The class definition includes both those who filed timely applications for legalization (including individuals

whose applications were denied and also individuals whose applications are still pending) and those who were “frontdesked” (individuals whose applications were not accepted during the legalization application period). *CSS* and *LULAC (Newman)* class members are also protected by the settlement; CIS must adjudicate any “known to the Government” issues in their applications pursuant to the procedures in the settlement.

There will be a one year application period for class members who were “front-desked” during the legalization application period. In addition, CIS must reopen and readjudicate legalization applications that were denied for failure to meet the “known to the Government” requirement. Class members may be able to show that they are eligible for legalization if they failed to submit to INS the required quarterly and/or annual address reports. The procedure for filing new applications and seeking benefits under the settlement does not commence until after the court has approved the settlement, which will be after July 15, 2008.

Lead counsel in the litigation include Robert Gibbs and Robert Pauw of Gibbs Houston Pauw, Seattle; and Peter Schey and Carlos Holguin, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, Los Angeles. Numerous other counsel have been involved in the long-running litigation.

Copies of the settlement documents and further information are available online at www.ghp-law.net or www.centerforhumanrights.org.