



Practice Pointer: Lautenberg Parolees

What are Lautenberg Parolees?

The “Lautenberg Amendment” was enacted in fiscal year 1990 as part of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act.¹ Under the Lautenberg Amendment, the Attorney General was required to designate certain groups of individuals from the former Soviet bloc, Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia who would be subject to a lower standard of proof to evidence their refugee status. The Amendment also provided for adjustment of status for those Soviet, Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian nationals who would be denied refugee status but paroled into the United States between Aug. 15, 1988, and Sept. 30, 2000. Implementing the Amendment, legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) initiated a “public interest parole” program, anticipating about 2000 people a month would be paroled under it.² The Lautenberg Amendment has expired and been extended a number of times, with one extension adding a category of certain individuals seeking refugee status from Iran.³ After the Amendment’s expiration on Sept. 30, 2011, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) ceased its parole policy under the Amendment, and did not reinstate the policy despite Congress subsequently renewing the Amendment’s provisions.

Because USCIS ended the Lautenberg parole program in 2011, parolees are no longer permitted entry pursuant to that program. However, those who were paroled under the program previously who meet the eligibility requirements under 245(a) continue to remain eligible to adjust their status. To show their eligibility, applicants should submit all documents required for an I-485 application packet, as well as evidence of former or current Soviet, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, or Iranian nationality and evidence of denied refugee status. They should also provide evidence of their parole.

¹ P.L. 101-167, Title V, §599D and §599E.

² “INS Implements Refugee Law Changes for Soviet Jews, Indochinese,” Vol. 67 No. 4 Interpreter Releases 85. (Jan. 22, 1990).

³ Green Card for a Lautenberg Parolee, uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-eligibility/green-card-for-a-lautenberg-parolee (last updated Nov. 27, 2017), P.L. 108-199, Division E, Title II, §213.