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CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT, MAINE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND
RELATED AGENCIES
INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES

March 10, 2022

Ur M. Jaddou
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Director Jaddou,

I am writing to you today to request a phone call with you or senior staff at USCIS to discuss ongoing USCIS processing delays affecting renewal applications for employment authorization documents (EADs) and options to address the current situation.

As you know, current regulations allow for an automatic extension of 180 days for employment authorization documents for certain categories of work permit renewals if the renewal application is properly filed before the previous work permit expires. Unfortunately, applicants attempting to renew their work permits are experiencing processing times of anywhere between 8 to 12 months, or even longer in some cases. My office is currently working with several individuals who filed their renewal applications as far back as April 2021 and are still awaiting a decision.

In recent months, my office has seen an exponential increase in the number of constituents whose current EAD has either expired or is about to expire, with our current caseload growing daily. These individuals are losing their jobs and their health insurance, and many are ineligible for unemployment. Additionally, Maine is facing a significant workforce shortage, and many employers are also alarmed at the prospect of losing many of their desperately needed workers.

My understanding is that USCIS has the authority to issue an Interim Final Rule to further extend the current 180-day automatic extension period, which could provide immediate relief to so many of my constituents while also alleviating some of the burden on Service Center staff.

What is clear is that the current situation is quickly becoming a crisis in my district. I respectfully request a call with you to discuss what current and additional actions USCIS is pursuing to help prevent more people from being unfairly forced out of the workforce due to circumstances beyond their control. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chellie Pingree".

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress