

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 720

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide temporary protected status to certain unaccompanied alien children, to provide for the adjustment of status of aliens unlawfully present in the United States who are under 18 years of age, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2001

Mr. WU (for himself, Mrs. MEEK of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide temporary protected status to certain unaccompanied alien children, to provide for the adjustment of status of aliens unlawfully present in the United States who are under 18 years of age, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Alien Children Protec-
5 tion Act of 2001”.

1 **SEC. 2. USE OF APPROPRIATE FACILITIES FOR THE DETEN-**
2 **TION OF ALIEN CHILDREN.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection
4 (b), in the case of any alien under 18 years of age who
5 is awaiting final adjudication of the alien’s immigration
6 status and who does not have a parent, guardian, or rel-
7 ative in the United States into whose custody the alien
8 may be released, the Attorney General shall place such
9 alien in a facility appropriate for children not later than
10 72 hours after the Attorney General has taken custody
11 of the alien.

12 (b) EXCEPTION.—The provisions of subsection (a) do
13 not apply to any alien under 18 years of age who the At-
14 torney General finds has engaged in delinquent behavior,
15 is an escape risk, or has a security need greater than that
16 provided in a facility appropriate for children.

17 (c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “facility
18 appropriate for children” means a facility, such as foster
19 care or group homes, operated by a private nonprofit orga-
20 nization, or by a local governmental entity, with experience
21 and expertise in providing for the legal, psychological, edu-
22 cational, physical, social, nutritional, and health require-
23 ments of children. The term “facility appropriate for chil-
24 dren” does not include any facility used primarily to house
25 adults or delinquent minors.

1 **SEC. 3. ADJUSTMENT TO PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS.**

2 Section 245 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
3 (8 U.S.C. 1255) is amended—

4 (1) by redesignating the subsection (l) added by
5 section 1513(f) of the Victims of Trafficking and Vi-
6 olence Protection Act of 2000 (Public Law 106–386;
7 114 Stat. 1536) as subsection (m); and

8 (2) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(n)(1) The Attorney General may, in the Attorney
10 General’s discretion, adjust the status of an alien under
11 18 years of age (or who was under 18 years of age when
12 taken into Government custody) who has no lawful immi-
13 gration status in the United States to that of an alien
14 lawfully admitted for permanent residence if—

15 “(A)(i) the alien (or a parent or legal guardian
16 acting on the alien’s behalf) has applied for the sta-
17 tus; and

18 “(ii) the alien has resided in the United States
19 for a period of 5 consecutive years; or

20 “(B)(i) no parent or legal guardian requests the
21 alien’s return to the country of the parent’s or
22 guardian’s domicile, or with respect to whom the At-
23 torney General finds that returning the child to his
24 or her country of origin would subject the child to
25 mental or physical abuse; and

1 or other individual who has received training in child wel-
2 fare matters and who is recognized by the Attorney Gen-
3 eral as being qualified to serve as a guardian ad litem (in
4 this section referred to as the “guardian”). The guardian
5 shall not be an employee of the Immigration and Natu-
6 ralization Service.

7 (b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The guardian shall ensure
8 that—

9 (1) the covered alien’s best interests are pro-
10 moted while the covered alien participates in, or is
11 subject to, the immigration proceeding; and

12 (2) the covered alien understands the pro-
13 ceeding.

14 (c) REQUIREMENTS ON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.—
15 The Attorney General shall serve notice of all matters af-
16 fecting a covered alien’s immigration status (including all
17 papers filed in an immigration proceeding) on the covered
18 alien’s guardian.

19 (d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “covered
20 alien” means an alien—

21 (1) who is under 18 years of age;

22 (2) who has no lawful immigration status in the
23 United States and is not within the physical custody
24 of a parent or legal guardian; and

1 (3) whom no parent or legal guardian requests
2 the person's return to the country of the parent's or
3 guardian's domicile or with respect to whom the At-
4 torney General finds that returning the child to his
5 or her country of origin would subject the child to
6 physical or mental abuse.

7 **SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

8 Congress commends the Immigration and Naturaliza-
9 tion Service for its issuance of its "Guidelines for Chil-
10 dren's Asylum Claims", dated December 1998, and en-
11 courages and supports the Service's implementation of
12 such guidelines in an effort to facilitate the handling of
13 children's asylum claims.

14 **SEC. 6. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE REPORT.**

15 The General Accounting Office shall prepare a report
16 to Congress regarding whether and to what extent U.S.
17 Embassy and consular officials are fulfilling their obliga-
18 tion to reunify, on a priority basis, children in foreign
19 countries whose parent or parents are legally present in
20 the United States.

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