



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

**JUN 3 2015**

Aryah Somers  
Director of Advocacy  
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)  
1300 L Street, NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Somers:

Thank you for your letter regarding the adjudication of Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) petitions. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) remains committed to providing information and outreach to stakeholders regarding the SIJ program. USCIS will continue to expand its outreach efforts with state courts across the United States to provide clarity on their role of issuing orders under state law versus the USCIS role of reviewing those orders to determine if the child meets the statutory requirements for the SIJ classification.

State juvenile courts make factual findings pursuant to relevant state laws concerning dependency or custody, parental reunification, and best interests of the child. If a child has a qualifying juvenile court order, he or she may file a petition with USCIS for classification as an SIJ. USCIS determines eligibility for SIJ status by reviewing the juvenile court order to ensure that all of the required findings were made and to determine whether or not to consent to the grant of SIJ status. In order to consent, USCIS must determine that the request for SIJ status is bona fide, which means the court order was sought primarily for relief from abuse, neglect, abandonment, or a similar basis under state law and not primarily to obtain an immigration benefit. It is longstanding USCIS policy that USCIS does not generally second-guess the court rulings. Orders that include or are supplemented by specific findings of fact will usually establish eligibility for consent. Such findings need not be overly detailed, but must reflect that the juvenile court made an informed decision.

USCIS is in the process of issuing comprehensive policy guidance on the adjudication of SIJ petitions. This forthcoming guidance will provide additional clarification on many of the issues raised in your letter, such as the privacy of juvenile court records. In addition, USCIS is pleased to announce that it is moving forward with plans to centralize SIJ adjudications. USCIS will adjudicate SIJ petitions (Form I-360) and SIJ-based adjustment of status applications (Form I-485) at a centralized location and refer SIJ cases for an interview at a field office as necessary.

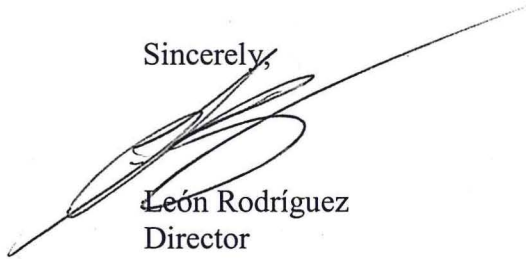
Ms. Aryah Somers

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The adjudication of the majority of SIJ petitions by a constant, core group of officers should help to further address any outstanding concerns. Also, USCIS is planning a national engagement for stakeholders following the release of the forthcoming SIJ policy guidance and will invite you and USCIS stakeholders at large to participate.

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your concerns regarding the adjudication of SIJ petitions, as your feedback is invaluable and supports USCIS in maintaining the integrity of this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'León Rodríguez', is written over the printed name. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

León Rodríguez  
Director