



EMBASSY OF THE  
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

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*Office of  
the Ambassador*

July 5, 2005

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Mr. Michael Petrucelli  
Acting Director  
Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)  
Department of Homeland Security  
20 Massachusetts Avenue  
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Mr. Petrucelli:

Subject: Employment Authorization Document (EAD) – Extended Validity

It is my understanding that the USCIS is currently considering the possibility of extending the validity dates of EAD cards for certain classes of applicants. Thus EAD cards that are currently valid for one year, may be extended for several years. I'm writing to request your consideration of extending the validity of EAD cards for citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Compact of Free Association (CFA) citizens, which includes the Freely Associated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau, are currently eligible to apply for the EAD card under nationality category A8 and are exempt from the filing fee. They are granted a card with validity for one year. Although under recently amended US public law 108-188, Micronesian citizens are no longer required to possess the EAD card for employment purposes, many of our citizens still find it absolutely necessary to obtain the EAD card for identification and other purposes.

Numerous other federal, state and private agencies such as Departments of Motor Vehicles, Social Security, schools and the like, are requiring the EAD as a valid document for identification purposes. This is also true for employers who aren't familiar with the Compact of Free Association and the current regulations. The EAD card has practically become the only official US document (outside of US military cards) that a Micronesian citizen may obtain that is recognized throughout the United States. This card has become crucial for Micronesians as they go through such routine matters as opening bank accounts and applying for school and other programs. It is no longer just an "employment authorization" card. It has become a crucial piece of identification for verification of legality and status in this country.

Micronesians often experience difficulties with the EAD card being valid for only 1 year. More often than not, people's status becomes a question to employers, landlords and the like as they await renewal or issuance of EAD cards. The expected delay in the



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application process of 90 days, which is 3 months in year, often takes longer. In certain states, Departments of Motor Vehicles have begun granting driver's licenses for the length of validity of the EAD card. There is an extra and unnecessary burden that Micronesians must go through every 8 - 9 months to avoid having their status questioned.

The Embassy and Consular offices are overwhelmed with calls from Micronesian and American citizens calling to inquire about status and legality of Micronesian citizens in the US. This has been especially so since September 11. We have been assisted by the recent DHS Fact Sheet which was issued in February of this year, however the problems and questions still remain. This instability for Micronesians could be much improved if the EAD card could be extended for more than a single year.

We believe that this would also go a long way in helping the American public at large in their various capacities to recognize the legitimate status of Micronesian citizens in this country. Extending the dates of the EAD card would also go hand in hand with the spirit of the Compact of Free Association agreement which is meant to enable Micronesians who choose to study and/or work in the United States.

We thank you for your kind consideration of our request and look forward to working in more detail with whomever your office would assign to handle such important matters.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse B. Marehalau", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jesse B. Marehalau  
Ambassador