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Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman	September 7, 2016

Dear Stakeholder,

USCIS has agreed with the Ombudsman's recommendation to implement a parole policy for U visa petitioners and qualifying family members who live abroad. The U visa – available to individuals who have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of a qualifying crime and who meet certain other criteria – are capped at 10,000 per fiscal year. When the cap is exceeded, U petitioners who live abroad are placed on a waiting list and must then proactively seek humanitarian parole to enter the United States. As a result, victims of crimes residing abroad are not able to easily aid investigators and prosecutors.

The Ombudsman's recommendation explains the clear regulatory authority for a parole policy and the significant public and humanitarian benefits. Family reunification allows the victim to focus attention on the prosecution of the crime and on rebuilding his or her life. In addition, U petitioners and derivate family members who remain abroad may be subject to violence and harm in the country in which they reside.

The Ombudsman is pleased that USCIS will implement this policy when a new form and policy guidance are completed in Fiscal Year 2017 and look forward to an announcement from USCIS regarding the remaining recommendations under consideration: 1) that USCIS allow for concurrent filings of the U visa and the request for parole; and 2) that parole requests be adjudicated at the Vermont Service Center.

Sincerely,

Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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