

U.S. sees rising fraud in employer-based visa programs

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution
May 6, 1999, Thursday,, Home Edition

Copyright 1999 The Atlanta Constitution

Section: News; Pg. 3E

Length: 348 words

Byline: Michelle Mittelstadt, Associated Press

Dateline: Washington

Body

More **fraud** is being found in **visa programs** that permit foreigners to work in the **United States**, State Department and immigration officials told a House panel Wednesday.

Some applicants are overstating their educational and professional achievements to secure **visas** reserved for professionals with special skills or for employees of multinational companies, the witnesses told the House Judiciary immigration subcommittee.

ConstitutionIn other cases, petitioning companies turn out to be nonexistent or mom-and-pop shops passing themselves off as multinational corporations, they said.

"What we are increasingly **seeing** are cases where brokers are facilitating production of **visas** approved for individuals in the **U.S.** on the premise that they will assume a highly technical job, only to find that the individuals are low-skilled workers," said Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers, the State Department's **s** inspector general.

The State Department has faced "significant challenges" in processing **visas**, she added, citing insufficient consular staffing and lack of training. She and the Justice Department's **s** inspector general, Michael Bromwich, also blamed insufficient coordination between the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department.

A consular official defended the State Department's **s** perform- ance.

"Given available resources, we believe we are doing a good job in detecting **fraud**," said Nancy Sambaiew, deputy assistant secretary of state for **visa** services.

The State Department processed 8.1 million **visa** applications last year --- spanning everything from tourist and student **visas** to **employer-based visas**.

"While the large majority of these **visas** are issued routinely, our experience shows that worldwide, there is a small percentage of **fraud** . . . and in a few geographic locations there are serious problems," Sambaiew said, identifying China, India and Russia as the trouble spots.

A joint INS-State Department investigation found that a fifth of the **visa** petitions examined out of the **U.S.** Consulate in Chennai, India, listed fraudulent work experience.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: PASSPORTS & **VISAS** (92%); IMMIGRATION (91%); IMMIGRATION LAW (90%); EMBASSIES &

U.S. sees rising fraud in employer-based visa programs

CONSULATES (90%); INVESTIGATIONS (89%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (78%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (78%); JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS (78%); SMALL BUSINESS (77%); WITNESSES (77%); TECHNICIANS & TECHNOLOGICAL WORKERS (72%); MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (72%)

Company: US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (56%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (56%)

Organization: US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (56%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (56%)

Geographic: CHENNAI, TAMIL NADU, INDIA (71%); INDIA (93%); **UNITED STATES** (93%); CHINA (79%); RUSSIAN FEDERATION (73%)

Load-Date: May 6, 1999

End of Document