

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2026

Honorable Mark Amodei
Chair
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Henry Cuellar
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Amodei and Ranking Member Cuellar:

As the Homeland Security Subcommittee develops its Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you include report language directing United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to adjudicate I-129 petitions for O and P nonimmigrant visas for extraordinary ability in the arts within 14 days of receiving a petition.

Report Language Request: The Committee is concerned by USCIS’s nontimely adjudications of O and P visa petitions. The Committee directs USCIS to provide resources to meet the agency’s statutory obligation to adjudicate I-129 petitions for O and P nonimmigrant visas for extraordinary ability in the arts within 14 days of receiving a petition.

Artists and U.S. arts organizations have dealt with excessive delays at USCIS and inconsistent consular processing policies. Current law requires USCIS to process petitions within 14 days of receipt. However, the reported average USCIS processing times for petitions filed through regular channels now stretch to more than 10 months. This forces many U.S. arts organizations to pay the \$2,965 premium processing fee or forfeit the chance to engage international artists.

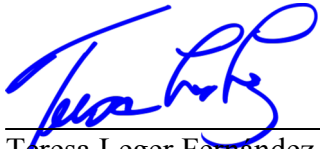
For U.S. arts organizations and their local economies, visa delays create high economic risks. Many U.S. arts organizations often sell tickets and promote international artists in advance. This creates a financial obligation to audiences and surrounding businesses that benefit from the economic ripple effects of vibrant arts activity and performances. These groups are subsequently impacted by delays in visa processing, which in some cases have led to cancellations of entire tours and events and loss of revenue. Recently FLIP Fabrique, a theatre and cirque performance group from Canada, had to cancel the first part of their U.S. tour due to visa processing delays, impacting tour dates in North Carolina, Maine, and Florida.¹

As USCIS continues to tackle the significant backlog of visa applications, including report language to direct action under current law will help restore reliability to a process that is essential for U.S. arts employers, artists, and audiences.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

¹ Bousquet, Carol. 2026. “Some Performances at the Merrill Auditorium Are Being Canceled due to Visa Issues and Travel Bans.” Maine Public. Maine Public (WMEH). February 13, 2026. <https://www.mainepublic.org/arts-and-culture/2026-02-13/some-performances-at-the-merrill-auditorium-are-being-canceled-due-to-visa-issues-and-travel-bans>.



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