

**Statement of Ranking Member Ken Buck**  
**Request for DHS Report on Corina de Chalup Turcinovic (H.R. 2737)**  
**Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship**  
**House Judiciary Committee**  
**Wednesday, June 26, 2019**

---

Thank you Madame Chair. Corina Turcinovic (TER-SIN-OH-VICH) entered the United States through the visa waiver program in 1990 shortly after receiving news that her then-fiancé, Marin Turcinovic, had been struck in New Jersey by a car driven by a drunk driver. Marin's spinal cord was severely damaged in the accident. He was left with total quadriplegia when his doctors failed to correctly diagnose the extent of his injuries, including broken vertebrae in his neck. His injuries left him completely dependent on Corina for care. He was dependent on a ventilator to breathe and he required 24-hour medical care.

Two months after her entry into the country, Corina filed an application for an extension of her temporary stay. INS denied the application because extensions of stay were not allowed under the visa waiver program. However, INS granted her a stay of

deportation on humanitarian grounds to allow Corina to stay in the U.S. to care for Marin in their home. Such stays of deportation were renewed on an annual basis for the next 10 years.

In 1996, Marin and Corina were married. In 1998, Marin became a lawful permanent resident. He then filed a petition for permanent residence for Corina. It was approved, and she was placed on the waiting list for green cards for spouses of permanent residents.

In 2003, Marin filed for naturalization - which, once granted, would allow Corina as the spouse of a citizen to immediately apply for adjustment of status. While a medical certification of disability made clear that Marin could not physically appear at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office, Marin nonetheless received a fingerprint appointment notice about two weeks later. Marin's attorney contacted USCIS and the agency responded that an officer would visit Marin at his home to further process his application. However, Marin then received notice that his

naturalization application had been denied due to abandonment because of his failure to appear for fingerprinting. Marin's attorney again contacted USCIS and filed a motion to reopen Marin's application. The motion was granted on March 8, 2004. However, Marin received another fingerprint appointment notice and died shortly later.

The case certainly is unique in that an alien who had come to the U.S. legally was allowed by the federal government to stay here for many years to care for her legal immigrant spouse. In a broader sense, there is precedent for H.R. 2737. First, Corina would have already been a conditional permanent resident by the time of her husband's death if not for USCIS error. Congress has enacted private bills in cases of aliens who would have received permanent residence but for a mistake by the federal immigration agency. Second, Congress has enacted private bills where alien spouses of American citizens have lost the right to receive permanent residence because of the death of the American citizen.

The House approved this private bill During the 110<sup>th</sup>, 112<sup>th</sup> and 113<sup>th</sup> Congresses. I recommend that we vote to request an updated DHS report so that we may then decide whether further consideration of this bill would be appropriate.

I yield back the balance of my time.