

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER

February 2, 2026

MARIA BENABIDES,	)	
Complainant,	)	
	)	
	)	
v.	)	8 U.S.C. § 1324b Proceeding
	)	OCAHO Case No. 2025B00037
	)	
MP WEST, LLC,	)	
Respondent.	)	
_____	)	

Appearances: Maria Benabides, pro se Complainant  
Rafael G. Nendel-Flores, Esq., for Respondent

REFERRAL TO SETTLEMENT OFFICER PROGRAM

This case arises under the antidiscrimination provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, 8 U.S.C. § 1324b.

On July 15, 2025, the Court held an initial prehearing conference, which was later summarized in an Order. In that Order, the Court provided information about the Court’s free mediation service, known as the Settlement Officer Program (SOP), along with a case schedule.

On December 16, 2025, Respondent submitted a written request seeking referral to the Settlement Officer Program, and a stay of deadlines pending completion of the Program.

On December 31, 2025, Complainant, who is pro se, submitted a “response” to Respondent’s referral request. This caused the Court to issue an Order providing further explanation about the mediation program seeking clarification from pro se Complainant about her interest in participating in mediation.

On January 20, 2026, Complainant filed a submission in which she stated she “agrees” to participate in the program.

The Court now refers this case to the Settlement Officer Program for a period of sixty days, beginning on **February 17, 2026**.

The Court designates the Honorable John Henderson, as the Settlement Officer for this case.

Should the parties reach a settlement, they shall inform the Court of such settlement. *See* 28 C.F.R. § 68.14.<sup>1</sup>

All case deadlines are STAYED until further notice.<sup>2</sup>

As a next step, parties may anticipate further contact from the Settlement Officer or his staff, and questions pertaining to Program logistics are best directed to them.

SO ORDERED.

Dated and entered on February 2, 2026.

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Honorable Andrea R. Carroll-Tipton  
Administrative Law Judge

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<sup>1</sup> OCAHO's Rules of Practice and Procedure, 28 C.F.R. pt. 68 (2024). While in the Program, parties should continue to comply with any applicable regulations at 28 C.F.R. pt. 68. Separately, parties will receive the Settlement Officer Program's rules as an attachment to this Order.

<sup>2</sup> Should the parties not reach an out-of-court resolution by the end of their time in the Program, they can anticipate a prehearing conference and revised case deadlines.