



United States Immigration and Naturalization Service

Santiago de Compostela, July 3, 2007.

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is [REDACTED]. I attended the Universities of Zaragoza and Valencia (Spain) between the years 1982 and 1987 and received Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Chemistry. During the years 1990 and 1994, I attended the University of Santiago de Compostela (Santiago de Compostela, Spain) and received my doctoral degree in Biochemistry. Between 1992 and 1993 I was awarded with a Research Scholar by the University of South Carolina, where I trained later on as a postdoctoral research fellow between 1995 and 1998. In 1998 I was recruited by the NHLBI, NIH in Bethesda, MD, as a research fellow in the Laboratory of Biochemistry. I am currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine of the University of Santiago de Compostela (Santiago de Compostela, Spain).

I am the author of 27 peer-reviewed scientific articles published in scholarly journals, two invited book chapters as well as numerous symposium abstracts. I have been involved in prion research for approximately 10 years. My research activities in this area of specialization put me in a position where is easy to assess the scientific value of Dr. [REDACTED]. Please see the copy of the resume attached.

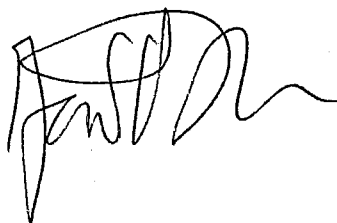
I am writing this letter in support of [REDACTED]'s application for Permanent Resident status. I have known Paula for 5 years; I first met her while she was a Ph.D. student at the Meixoeiro University Hospital in Vigo, Spain, as she assisted me in some experiments that I was carrying out at my institution, the University of Santiago, which is located nearby. I was very positively impressed by her intellectual capabilities and her technical skills, and shortly thereafter recommended her to my colleague Dr. [REDACTED], at the time a staff scientist with the pharmaceutical company Serono, who was recruiting students and postdocs to expand his research team at the company's R&D facility in Geneva, Switzerland. Later, when Dr. [REDACTED] accepted a position at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Paula moved with him and the rest of his group to that new location. More recently, after defending her Ph.D. dissertation (I was one of the members

of her committee), she has started at a postdoctoral position at the Scripps Research Institute in Jupiter, Florida. Throughout these years, I have maintained a close contact with [REDACTED] we have met several times at international scientific meetings and I have invited her to give a talk about her work at my institution. We both work in the same research area, the biochemistry of prions, the novel infectious agents that cause "mad cow disease" and "chronic wasting disease" and that are transmissible to humans; therefore, I am well aware of how her work has developed during this period. In this respect, I have to say that [REDACTED]'s achievements are quite impressive, as attested by her list of publications in some of the most prestigious scientific journals. For example, her 2006 paper "Presymptomatic detection of prions in blood" published in the journal *Science* is a landmark study which I would rank as one of the most important contributions to the field in the last 3 years, as it opens a new and exciting research avenue. Early detection of prions in blood is of the utmost importance: on the one hand, it will allow an early treatment of human prion disease, such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, once such treatments became available; on the other, it will help control and eradicate prions from the food chain. It should be remembered that mad cow disease has resulted in losses of millions of euros in the EU and that recent temporary import bans on US beef in the aftermath of a first US case of the disease, also resulted in multi-million dollar losses for the US meat industry.

Considering all this, I believe that [REDACTED] is a fantastic asset for the US research community, and I strongly recommend that her application for Permanent Resident status be considered favorably, certainly at a loss for us in Spain. As for [REDACTED]'s character, I can attest that she is an honest, reliable person with a strong work ethics.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information.

With best regards,



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