United States Court of Appeals

SELYA, Circuit Judge. This case involves the manner in which the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) processes (or fails to process) petitions by citizens requesting permanent residence in the United States for their alien spouses. These importunings are commonly called "immediate relative" visa petitions (IRV petitions). The pertinent statute is 8 U.S.C. § 1154(a)

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[1]The twelve-month period appears to be snatched out of thin air. Moreover, such a timetable obviously has no bearing with respect to the named plaintiffs, whose petitions and applications were pending for upwards of twenty-two months when they started suit.

immigration

plaintiffs made no effort to amend their complaint to add new

2 There

[2]There is a narrow exception to this principle, exemplified by Gerstein v. Pugh, 420 U.S. 103, 110 n.11 (1975). We discuss this exception infra.

4

again); see also Erwin Chemerinsky, Federal Jurisdiction § 2.5.3 (3d ed. 1999); 13A Charles Alan Wright et al., Federal Practice and

Murphy, 455 U.S. at 482-83 (finding no "reasonable expectation" or

[6]The plaintiffs themselves tell us that there are literally

INS to process plaintiffs' naturalization applications in favor of theory that INS had acted "in due course, albeit significantly delayed due course").

We need go no further. Although the charges that the plaintiffs levy against the INS are serious, mootness goes to the federal courts' jurisdiction. Iron Arrow Honor Soc'y v. Heckler, 464 U.S. 67, 70 (1983u0rer c juam);.