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SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILE STATUS

What does it do? It is a program allowing for special immigrant juveniles (those under 18) to obtain a green card in the United States

- It helps foreign children in the United States that have been abandoned, abused, or neglected by one or both parents
- Minors that obtain a green card through Special Immigrant Juvenile cases can live and work permanently in the United States
 - The other benefits- with a green card, a person can travel to other countries and return without asking special permission, live and work in the U.S. permanently, claim some government benefits, receive federal student financial aid for college, serve in the U.S. military, and sponsor a spouse and children for green cards.

To petition for SIJS, a state court order is required and must have certain findings for the USCIS to determine your status

- In North Carolina, you can utilize family court to make these findings.
- The state court must:
 - Declare that you are a dependent of the court and to legally place you in the custody of a person or agency (this will usually be that a single mother, single father, or other relative seeks custody of the minor)
 - It is not in your best interests to return to your home country (or country that lived in previously) and
 - You cannot be reunited with a parent because of ANY of the following
 - Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Abandonment
 - Similar reason under state law(ONLY ONE parent must have abused, abandoned, or neglected the minor for this to be sufficient)

Important facts about this

- The child does not have to have entered the country legally or to have a current temporary legal status to apply.
- The person seeking custody (for the first part of the process) does not have to be here legally