

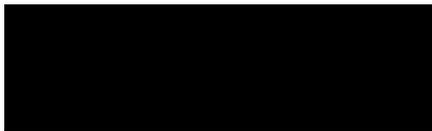
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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
20 Mass. Ave., N.W., Rm. A3042
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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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FILE:



Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER

Date: JUN 14 2005

IN RE:

Applicant:



APPLICATION:

Application for Permission to Reapply for Admission into the United States after Deportation or Removal under section 212(a)(9)(A)(iii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(A)(iii)

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for permission to reapply for admission after removal was denied by the Director, California Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant is a native and a citizen of Mexico who entered the United States without a lawful admission or parole on or about January 1, 1986, and on September 30, 1997, he applied for asylum. On November 7, 1997, the applicant was interviewed for asylum status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (now Citizenship and Immigration Services, (CIS)) and was referred to an Immigration Judge for a court hearing. The record reflects that on March 18, 1998, an Immigration Judge granted the applicant voluntary departure until July 16, 1998, in lieu of removal. The applicant states that he departed the United States and submits a copy of a Mexican drivers' license issued on December 27, 1999. The record fails to establish that the applicant departed on or prior to July 16, 1998. The applicant's failure to prove his departure on or prior to July 16, 1998, changed the voluntary departure order to an order of removal. The record reflects that the applicant reentered the United States in January 2000, without a lawful admission or parole and without permission to reapply for admission in violation of section 276 of Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1326 (a felony). The applicant married a U.S. citizen on March 5, 2001, and he is the beneficiary of an approved Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130) filed by his spouse. The applicant is inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(A)(ii) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(A)(ii). He seeks permission to reapply for admission into the United States under section 212(a)(9)(A)(iii) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(A)(iii) in order to remain in the United States and reside with his U.S. citizen spouse.

The Director determined that the applicant was inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(C), of the Act for having been unlawfully present in the United States for an aggregate period of more than one year and was not eligible for an exception or waiver under this section of the Act. The Director then denied the Application for Permission to Reapply for Admission After Deportation or Removal (Form I-212) accordingly. See *Director's Decision* dated August 30, 2004.

Section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act states in pertinent part:

(C) Aliens unlawfully present after previous immigration violations. -

(i) In general.- Any alien who-

(I) has been unlawfully present in the United States for an aggregate period of more than 1 year, or

(II) has been ordered removed under section 235(b)(1), section 240, or any other provision of law, and who enters or attempts to reenter the United States without being admitted is inadmissible.

(ii) Exception.- Clause (i) shall not apply to an alien seeking admission more than 10 years after the date of the alien's last departure from the United States if, prior to the alien's reembarkation at a place outside the United States or attempt to be readmitted from a foreign contiguous territory, the Attorney General [now the Secretary of Homeland Security, "Secretary"] has consented to the alien's reapplying for admission. The Attorney General in the Attorney General's

discretion may waive the provisions of section 212(a)(9)(C)(i) in the case of an alien to whom the Attorney General has granted classification under clause (iii), (iv), or (v) of section 204(a)(1)(A), or classification under clause (ii), (iii), or (iv) of section 204(a)(1)(B), in any case in which there is a connection between—

- (1) the alien's having been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty; and
- (2) the alien's--
 - (A) removal;
 - (B) departure from the United States;
 - (C) reentry or reentries into the United States; or
 - (D) attempted reentry into the United States.

On appeal, counsel submits a brief in which he states that the Service erred in concluding that the applicant is inadmissible due to his illegal reentry and continued residence in the United States. Counsel states that based on a recent Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, the applicant is eligible to file a Form I-212 and requests that the application be remanded to the Service Center in order to be adjudicated on its merits.

The AAO concurs with counsel in part. In its August 14, 2004, decision, *Perez-Gonzalez v. Ashcroft*, 379 F.3d 783 (9th Cir. 2004), the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a Mexican national who returned to the United States following a deportation and had his deportation order reinstated could nonetheless obtain adjustment of status if his Form I-212 was granted. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals stated in *Perez-Gonzalez* that: "Given the fact that Perez-Gonzalez applied for the waiver *before* his deportation order was reinstated, he was not yet subject to its terms and, therefore, was not barred from applying for relief." The Court further states: "Prior administrative decisions of the Bureau of Immigration Appeals confirm the fact that permission to reapply is available on a *nunc pro tunc* basis, in which the petitioner receives permission to reapply for admission after he or she has already reentered the country." Finally the Court found that: ". . . if permission to reapply is granted, the approval of Form I-212 is retroactive to the date on which the alien entered the country, and therefore, the alien is no longer subject to the grounds of inadmissibility in § 212(a)(9)."

The record of proceedings does not reveal that the applicant's prior removal order was reinstated at the time he filed the Form I-212. Since this case arises in the Ninth Circuit, *Perez-Gonzalez* is controlling. The applicant is eligible to file a Form I-212 and if approved he will not be inadmissible pursuant to section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act.

An application or petition that fails to comply with the technical requirements of the law may be denied by the AAO even if the Service Center does not identify all of the grounds for denial in the initial decision. See *Spencer Enterprises, Inc. v. United States*, 229 F. Supp. 2d 1025, 1043 (E.D. Cal. 2001), *aff'd*, 345 F.3d 683 (9th Cir. 2003); see also *Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2^d Cir. 1989)(noting that the AAO reviews appeals on a *de novo* basis).

This office finds that although the applicant is not subject to section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act, he is clearly inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(A) of the Act.

Section 212(a)(9)(A) of the Act states in pertinent part:

(A) Certain aliens previously removed.-

(i) Arriving aliens.- Any alien who has been ordered removed under section 235(b)(1) or at the end of proceedings under section 240 initiated upon the alien's arrival in the United States and who again seeks admission within five years of the date of such removal (or within 20 years in the case of a second or subsequent removal or at any time in the case of an alien convicted of an aggravated felony) is inadmissible.

. . . .

(iii) Exception.- Clauses (i) and (ii) shall not apply to an alien seeking admission within a period if, prior to the date of the aliens' reembarkation at a place outside the United States or attempt to be admitted from foreign continuous territory, the Attorney General has consented to the aliens' reapplying for admission.

A review of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) amendments to the Act and prior statutes and case law regarding permission to reapply for admission, reflects that Congress has (1) increased the bar to admissibility and the waiting period from 5 to 10 years in most instances and to 20 years for others, (2) has added a bar, with limited exceptions, to admissibility for aliens who are unlawfully present in the United States, and (3) has imposed a permanent bar to admission for aliens who have been ordered removed and who subsequently enter or attempt to enter the United States without being lawfully admitted. It is concluded that Congress has placed a high priority on reducing and/or stopping aliens from overstaying their authorized period of stay and/or from being present in the United States without a lawful admission or parole.

In *Matter of Tin*, 14 I&N Dec. 371 (Reg. Comm. 1973), the Regional Commissioner listed the following factors to be considered in the adjudication of a Form I-212 Application for Permission to Reapply After Deportation:

The basis for deportation; recency of deportation; length of residence in the United States; applicant's moral character; his respect for law and order; evidence of reformation and rehabilitation; family responsibilities; any inadmissibility under other sections of law; hardship involved to himself and others; and the need for his services in the United States.

In *Tin*, the Regional Commissioner noted that the applicant had gained an equity (job experience) while being unlawfully present in the U.S. The Regional Commissioner then stated that the alien had obtained an advantage over aliens seeking visa issuance abroad or who abide by the terms of their admission while in this country, and he concluded that approval of an application for permission to reapply for admission would condone the alien's acts and could encourage others to enter the United States to work in the United States unlawfully. *Id.*

Matter of Lee, 17 I&N Dec. 275 (Comm. 1978) further held that a record of immigration violations, standing alone, did not conclusively support a finding of a lack of good moral character. *Matter of Lee* at 278. *Lee* additionally held that,

[T]he recency of deportation can only be considered when there is a finding of poor moral character based on moral turpitude in the conduct and attitude of a person which evinces a callous conscience [toward the violation of immigration laws] In all other instances when the cause of deportation has been removed and the person now appears eligible for issuance of a visa, the time factor should not be considered. *Id.*

The court held in *Garcia-Lopes v. INS*, 923 F.2d 72 (7th Cir. 1991), that less weight is given to equities acquired after a deportation order has been entered. Further, the equity of a marriage and the weight given to any hardship to the spouse is diminished if the parties married after the commencement of deportation proceedings, with knowledge that the alien might be deported. It is also noted that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in *Carnalla-Nunoz v. INS*, 627 F.2d 1004 (9th Cir. 1980), held that an after-acquired equity, referred to as an after-acquired family tie in *Matter of Tijam*, 22 I&N Dec. 408 (BIA 1998) need not be accorded great weight by the district director in considering discretionary weight. Moreover, in *Ghassan v. INS*, 972 F.2d 631, 634-35 (5th Cir. 1992), the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals held that giving diminished weight to hardship faced by a spouse who entered into a marriage with knowledge of the alien's possible deportation was proper.

The applicant in the present matter entered the United States without inspection in January 2000, and married his U.S. citizen spouse on March 5, 2001, a year after he was placed in removal proceedings. The applicant's spouse should reasonably have been aware of the applicant's immigration violations and the possibility of his being removed at the time of their marriage. He now seeks relief based on that after-acquired equity.

The AAO finds that the favorable factors in this case are the applicant's family ties in the United States, his U.S. citizen spouse, an approved petition for alien relative and the absence of any criminal record.

The unfavorable factors in this case include the applicant's illegal entry into the United States on January 1, 1986, his failure to depart the United States after he was granted voluntary departure, his illegal reentry subsequent to his departure, his employment without authorization and his lengthy presence in the United States without a lawful admission or parole. The Commissioner stated in *Matter of Lee, supra*, that residence in the United States could be considered a positive factor only where that residence is pursuant to a legal admission or adjustment of status as a permanent resident. To reward a person for remaining in the United States in violation of law would seriously threaten the structure of all laws pertaining to immigration.

The applicant's actions in this matter cannot be condoned. His equity, marriage to a U.S. citizen, gained after he was placed in removal proceedings, can be given only minimal weight. The applicant has not established by supporting evidence that the favorable factors outweigh the unfavorable ones.

Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361, provides that the burden of proof is upon the applicant to establish that the applicant is eligible for the benefit sought. After a careful review of the record, it is concluded that the applicant has failed to establish that a favorable exercise of the Secretary's discretion is warranted. Accordingly, the appeal will be dismissed.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.