

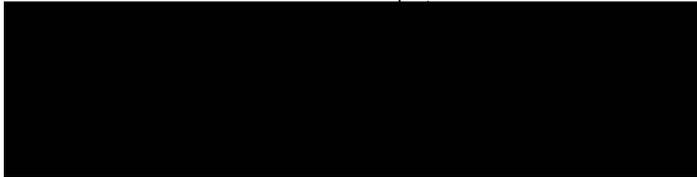
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U.S. Citizenship
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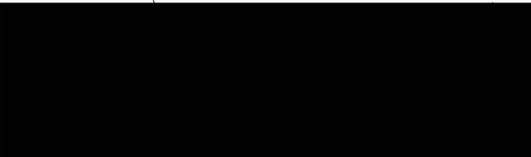
PUBLIC COPY



FILE: Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date: AUG 04 2006

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, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Application for Permission to Reapply for Admission into the United States after Deportation or Removal (Form I-212) was denied by the Director, Vermont Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant is a native and citizen of Ecuador who was admitted into the United States as a non-immigrant visitor for pleasure on November 4, 1984 with an authorized period of stay until May 3, 1985. On December 11, 1984, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (now Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS)) apprehended the applicant working illegally. The applicant was charged with section 241(a)(9)¹ of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), as a nonimmigrant who failed to maintain the conditions of his status. On the same day, an Order to Show Cause (OSC) for a hearing before an Immigration Judge was issued. On December 13, 1984, an immigration judge found the applicant deportable and granted voluntary departure until January 14, 1985, in lieu of deportation. The applicant failed to surrender for removal or depart from the United States. The applicant's failure to depart on or prior to January 14, 1985, changed the voluntary departure order to an order of deportation. On February 26, 1985, a Warrant of Deportation (Form I-205) was issued. Consequently, on April 5, 1985 the applicant was deported to Ecuador. The record reveals that the applicant reentered the United States on an unknown date, but approximately six months after his deportation, without a lawful admission or parole and without permission to reapply for admission, in violation of section 276 the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1326 (a felony). The record further reflects that the applicant was convicted for driving under the influence, disorderly conduct and criminal possession of a weapon. The applicant is the beneficiary of an approved Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130) filed by his Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) spouse. The applicant is inadmissible pursuant to 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 LPR spouse and U.S. citizen child.

The Director determined that the unfavorable factors in the applicant's case outweighed the favorable factors, and denied the Form I-212 accordingly. See *Director's Decision* dated May 11, 2005.

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

(A) Certain aliens previously removed.-

(ii) Other aliens.- Any alien not described in clause (i) who-

(I) has been ordered removed under section 240 or any other provision of law, or

(II) departed the United States while an order of removal was outstanding, and seeks admission within 10 years of the date of such alien's departure or removal (or within 20 years of such date 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.

¹ Now section 237(a)(1)(C)(i) of the Act.

(iii) Exception.- Clauses (i) and (ii) shall not apply to an alien seeking admission within a period if, prior to the date of the alien's reembarkation at a place outside the United States or attempt to be admitted from foreign contiguous territory, the Attorney General [now Secretary, Homeland Security, "Secretary"] has consented to the alien's 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 in others; (2) has added a bar to admissibility for aliens who are unlawfully present in the United States; (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.

On appeal, counsel submits a brief in which he states that the Director abused his discretion and failed to discuss the applicant's recency of deportation, the health of the applicant's spouse, and the hardships that the applicant's spouse and child would suffer by the applicant's departure. Counsel states that the applicant's deportation occurred more than 20 year ago and he has been a productive member of society and a contributing taxpayer since he returned to the United States. In addition, counsel states that the number and quality of the applicant's positive equities outweigh the negative ones and the Form I-212 should be approved.

Although counsel mentioned that the applicant's spouse's health would be impacted by his departure, and that she and the applicant's child would suffer hardship, he failed to submit supporting evidence to demonstrate the impact of the applicants' departure on his family.

Going on record without supporting documentary evidence is not sufficient for purposes of meeting the burden of proof in these proceedings. *Matter of Soffici*, 22 I&N Dec. 158, 165 (Comm. 1998) (citing *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972)).

The record of proceedings contains a psychological report, which states that the applicant's removal from the United States has precipitated discernible anxiety and dysphoria to both the applicant's spouse and child. In addition, it states that the applicant's removal from the United States "would be both emotionally/psychologically devastating to both [redacted] and her son." The record of proceedings further reflects that the applicant's spouse uses hearing aids for both ears, which makes it difficult for her to obtain certain types of work.

Unlike sections 212(g), (h), and (i) of the Act (which relate to waivers of inadmissibility for prospective immigrants), section 212(a)(9)(A)(iii) of the Act does not specify hardship threshold requirements which must be met. An applicant seeking permission to reapply for admission into the United States after deportation or removal need not establish that a particular level of hardship would result to a qualifying family member if the application were denied. The AAO will consider the hardship to the applicant's spouse and child, but it will be just one of the determining factors.

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 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 married his LPR spouse on November 18, 1996, over eleven and one half years after he was deported from the United States, and after he illegally reentered. The applicant's spouse should reasonably have been aware at the time of their marriage of the possibility of his being removed. He now seeks relief based on that after-acquired equity. Therefore, hardship to his spouse will not be accorded great weight.

The AAO finds that the favorable factors in this case are the applicant's family ties in the United States, his LPR spouse and U.S. citizen child, an approved Form I-130, and the prospect of general hardship to his family.

The AAO finds that the unfavorable factors in this case include the applicant's failure to maintain his nonimmigrant status after he was admitted as a visitor for pleasure, his failure to depart the United States after he was granted voluntary departure and after his voluntary departure order became a final order of deportation, his illegal reentry subsequent to his deportation, his conviction for possession of a firearm, 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 an LPR, gained after he was placed in deportation proceedings, after his voluntary departure order had expired and after he illegally reentered the United States, 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.