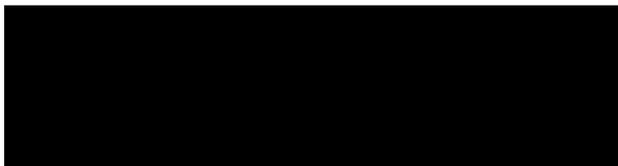


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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529-2090
**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**



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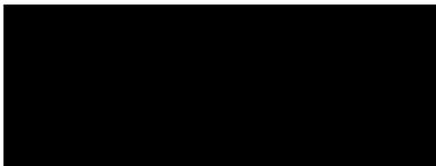
Office: LIMA

FILE: 

IN RE: Applicant: 

APPLICATION: Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility under section 212(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(i)

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All of the documents related to this matter have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Please be advised that any further inquiry that you might have concerning your case must be made to that office.

Thank you,


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Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

to the United States of such immigrant alien would result in extreme hardship to the citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent of such an alien....

A waiver of inadmissibility under section 212(i) of the Act is dependent on a showing that the bar to admission imposes extreme hardship on a qualifying relative, which includes the U.S. citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent of the applicant. The applicant's U.S. citizen spouse is the only qualifying relative in this case. Hardship to the applicant, her in-laws or her lawful permanent resident child can be considered only insofar as it results in hardship to a qualifying relative. If extreme hardship to a qualifying relative is established, the applicant is statutorily eligible for a waiver, and USCIS then assesses whether a favorable exercise of discretion is warranted. See *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996).

Extreme hardship is "not a definable term of fixed and inflexible content or meaning," but "necessarily depends upon the facts and circumstances peculiar to each case." *Matter of Hwang*, 10 I&N Dec. 448, 451 (BIA 1964). In *Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, the Board provided a list of factors it deemed relevant in determining whether an alien has established extreme hardship to a qualifying relative. 22 I&N Dec. 560, 565 (BIA 1999). The factors include the presence of a lawful permanent resident or United States citizen spouse or parent in this country; the qualifying relative's family ties outside the United States; the conditions in the country or countries to which the qualifying relative would relocate and the extent of the qualifying relative's ties in such countries; the financial impact of departure from this country; and significant conditions of health, particularly when tied to an unavailability of suitable medical care in the country to which the qualifying relative would relocate. *Id.* The Board added that not all of the foregoing factors need be analyzed in any given case and emphasized that the list of factors was not exclusive. *Id.* at 566.

The Board has also held that the common or typical results of removal and inadmissibility do not constitute extreme hardship, and has listed certain individual hardship factors considered common rather than extreme. These factors include: economic disadvantage, loss of current employment, inability to maintain one's present standard of living, inability to pursue a chosen profession, separation from family members, severing community ties, cultural readjustment after living in the United States for many years, cultural adjustment of qualifying relatives who have never lived outside the United States, inferior economic and educational opportunities in the foreign country, or inferior medical facilities in the foreign country. See generally *Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, 22 I&N Dec. at 568; *Matter of Pilch*, 21 I&N Dec. 627, 632-33 (BIA 1996); *Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. 880, 883 (BIA 1994); *Matter of Ngai*, 19 I&N Dec. 245, 246-47 (Comm'r 1984); *Matter of Kim*, 15 I&N Dec. 88, 89-90 (BIA 1974); *Matter of Shaughnessy*, 12 I&N Dec. 810, 813 (BIA 1968).

However, though hardships may not be extreme when considered abstractly or individually, the Board has made it clear that "[r]elevant factors, though not extreme in themselves, must be considered in the aggregate in determining whether extreme hardship exists." *Matter of O-J-O-*, 21 I&N Dec. 381, 383 (BIA 1996) (quoting *Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. at 882). The adjudicator "must consider the entire range of factors concerning hardship in their totality and determine whether the combination of hardships takes the case beyond those hardships ordinarily associated with deportation." *Id.*

The actual hardship associated with an abstract hardship factor such as family separation, economic disadvantage, cultural readjustment, et cetera, differs in nature and severity depending on the unique circumstances of each case, as does the cumulative hardship a qualifying relative experiences as a result of aggregated individual hardships. *See, e.g., Matter of Bing Chih Kao and Mei Tsui Lin*, 23 I&N Dec. 45, 51 (BIA 2001) (distinguishing *Matter of Pilch* regarding hardship faced by qualifying relatives on the basis of variations in the length of residence in the United States and the ability to speak the language of the country to which they would relocate). For example, though family separation has been found to be a common result of inadmissibility or removal, separation from family living in the United States can also be the most important single hardship factor in considering hardship in the aggregate. *See Salcido-Salcido*, 138 F.3d at 1293 (quoting *Contreras-Buenfil v. INS*, 712 F.2d 401, 403 (9th Cir. 1983)); *but see Matter of Ngai*, 19 I&N Dec. at 247 (separation of spouse and children from applicant not extreme hardship due to conflicting evidence in the record and because applicant and spouse had been voluntarily separated from one another for 28 years). Therefore, we consider the totality of the circumstances in determining whether denial of admission would result in extreme hardship to a qualifying relative.

The applicant's U.S. citizen spouse contends that he will suffer emotional and financial hardship were he to remain in the United States while the applicant resides abroad due to her inadmissibility. In a declaration the applicant's spouse explains that he met his wife in 1988 and long-term separation from her is causing him emotional hardship. He notes that he has sought professional help as he is experiencing chest pain, anxiety and depression. In addition, the applicant's spouse details that his son recently obtained permanent resident status and relocated to the United States and as a result of long-term separation from his mother, he is experiencing emotional and academic hardship, thus causing the applicant's spouse hardship. He explains that his son's grades are deteriorating, he misses his mother very much and he has expressed disinterest in continuing his studies. The applicant's spouse contends that his son needs his mother and father's daily presence and support. Finally, the applicant's spouse contends that as a result of having to support two households, and due to the high costs of traveling to Peru regularly to visit his wife, he is in credit card debt of over \$40,000, one of his cars has been repossessed and he may have to file for bankruptcy. *Declaration of [REDACTED]* dated March 23, 2010. In a separate statement, the applicant's spouse details that as a result of his wife's inadmissibility and the stress associated with having to care for his son on his own, his work is suffering and he is missing out on work opportunities as he is unable to leave his son alone for days. *Letter from [REDACTED]*, dated June 30, 2011.

Evidence that the applicant's spouse is presently under a physician's care for Atypical Chest Pain, Anxiety and Depression due to his wife's inadmissibility has been provided. Said documentation also establishes that the applicant's spouse has been referred to a psychiatrist for further evaluation. In addition, documentation establishing the applicant's son's academic deterioration, going from being a solid A student in October 2009 to receiving multiple Ds in March 2010, has been submitted by counsel. Moreover, financial documentation establishing that the applicant's spouse is in debt and has been sent to a collection agency due to a delinquent account has been provided. Finally, letters have been provided from the applicant's spouse's father and mother-in-law referencing the hardships the applicant's spouse and child are experiencing due to long-term separation from the applicant.

Based on a totality of the circumstances, the AAO finds that the hardship the applicant's U.S. citizen spouse is experiencing as a result of his wife's residence abroad due to her inadmissibility rises to the level of extreme. The AAO thus concludes that were the applicant unable to reside in the United States due to her inadmissibility, the applicant's spouse would suffer extreme hardship.

With respect to relocating abroad to reside with the applicant based on the denial of the applicant's waiver request, the applicant's spouse explains that he came to the United States in 1999 in search of a better life and were he to return to Peru, he would experience emotional, professional and financial hardship. To begin, he explains that his son, father, step-mother and two siblings reside in the United States and long-term separation from them would cause him hardship. In addition, the applicant's spouse details that he has been gainfully employed for a long-term basis with Hobigs Watch Repair and relocating abroad would cause him professional and financial hardship. The applicant's spouse concludes that his life in the United States, he enjoys his work and he makes three times the amount of money in the United States than what he would make in Peru and thus, relocating abroad would cause him hardship. *Supra* at 1-3. The record reflects that the applicant's U.S. citizen spouse would be forced to relocate to a country with which he is no longer familiar, as he has been residing in the United States for over a decade. He would have to leave his home, his community, his son, parents and siblings and his long-term gainful employment. It has thus been established that the applicant's spouse would suffer extreme hardship were he to relocate abroad to reside with the applicant due to her inadmissibility.

A review of the documentation in the record, when considered in its totality, reflects that the applicant has established that her U.S. citizen spouse would suffer extreme hardship were the applicant unable to reside in the United States. Accordingly, the AAO finds that the situation presented in this application rises to the level of extreme hardship. However, the grant or denial of the waiver does not turn only on the issue of the meaning of "extreme hardship." It also hinges on the discretion of the Secretary and pursuant to such terms, conditions and procedures as she may by regulations prescribe. In discretionary matters, the alien bears the burden of proving eligibility in terms of equities in the United States which are not outweighed by adverse factors. *See Matter of T-S-Y*, 7 I&N Dec. 582 (BIA 1957).

In evaluating whether . . . relief is warranted in the exercise of discretion, the factors adverse to the alien include the nature and underlying circumstances of the exclusion ground at issue, the presence of additional significant violations of this country's immigration laws, the existence of a criminal record, and if so, its nature and seriousness, and the presence of other evidence indicative of the alien's bad character or undesirability as a permanent resident of this country. The favorable considerations include family ties in the United States, residence of long duration in this country (particularly where alien began residency at a young age), evidence of hardship to the alien and his family if he is excluded and deported, service in this country's Armed Forces, a history of stable employment, the existence of property or business ties, evidence of value or service in the

community, evidence of genuine rehabilitation if a criminal record exists, and other evidence attesting to the alien's good character (e.g., affidavits from family, friends and responsible community representatives).

See Matter of Mendez-Moralez, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996). The AAO must then "balance the adverse factors evidencing an alien's undesirability as a permanent resident with the social and humane considerations presented on the alien's behalf to determine whether the grant of relief in the exercise of discretion appears to be in the best interests of the country." *Id.* at 300. (Citations omitted).

The favorable factors in this matter are the extreme hardship the applicant's U.S. citizen spouse and lawful permanent resident child would face if the applicant were to remain in Peru, regardless of whether they accompanied the applicant or stayed in the United States, the applicant's apparent lack of a criminal record, support letters from family members, and the passage of more than twelve years since the applicant attempted to procure entry to the United States by fraud or willful misrepresentation. The unfavorable factor in this matter is the applicant's attempt to procure entry to the United States by fraud or willful misrepresentation.

The immigration violation committed by the applicant is serious in nature and cannot be condoned. Nonetheless, the AAO finds that the applicant has established that the favorable factors in her application outweigh the unfavorable factor. Therefore, a favorable exercise of the Secretary's discretion is warranted.

In proceedings for application for waiver of grounds of inadmissibility, the burden of establishing that the application merits approval remains entirely with the applicant. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The applicant has sustained that burden. Accordingly, this appeal will be sustained and the application approved.

ORDER: The appeal is sustained. The waiver application is approved.