



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

(b)(6)

DATE: OCT 03 2013

OFFICE: WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE

FILE: [REDACTED]

IN RE: [REDACTED]

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:
[REDACTED]

INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) in your case.

This is a non-precedent decision. The AAO does not announce new constructions of law nor establish agency policy through non-precedent decisions. If you believe the AAO incorrectly applied current law or policy to your case or if you seek to present new facts for consideration, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen, respectively. Any motion must be filed on a Notice of Appeal or Motion (Form I-290B) within 33 days of the date of this decision. **Please review the Form I-290B instructions at <http://www.uscis.gov/forms> for the latest information on fee, filing location, and other requirements. See also 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. Do not file a motion directly with the AAO.**

Thank you,

Ron Rosenberg
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Field Office Director, Washington, DC, denied the waiver application and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant is a native and citizen of Ghana who was found to be inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(C)(i), for attempting to procure entry to the United States by fraud or willful misrepresentation. The applicant seeks a waiver of inadmissibility in order to reside in the United States with his U.S. citizen spouse and children.

The Field Office Director concluded that the record failed to establish the existence of extreme hardship for a qualifying relative and denied the application accordingly. *See Decision of the Field Office Director*, dated June 14, 2012.

On appeal, counsel for the applicant asserts that the applicant's spouse, as a prior drug abuser who is not employed, would suffer extreme financial and emotional hardship upon separation from the applicant. Counsel further asserts that the applicant's spouse cannot relocate to Ghana because of her family ties to the United States and the country conditions in Ghana.

In support of the waiver application and appeal, the applicant submitted a letter, identity documents, documents concerning his criminal record, country conditions concerning Ghana, a letter from his spouse, and financial documentation. The entire record was reviewed and considered in rendering a decision on the appeal.

Section 212(a)(6)(C) of the Act provides, in pertinent part:

(i) Any alien who, by fraud or willfully misrepresenting a material fact, seeks to procure (or has sought to procure or has procured) a visa, other documentation, or admission into the United States or other benefit provided under this Act is inadmissible.

Section 212(i) of the Act provides:

(1) The Attorney General [now the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary)] may, in the discretion of the Attorney General (Secretary), waive the application of clause (i) of subsection (a)(6)(C) in the case of an immigrant who is the spouse, son or daughter of a United States citizen or of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence if it is established to the satisfaction of the Attorney General (Secretary) that the refusal of admission 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...

The applicant attempted to enter the United States, on December 9, 1985, pursuant to a United Kingdom passport belonging to another individual. The applicant does not dispute this ground of

inadmissibility on appeal. The applicant is inadmissible under section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Act for procuring admission to the United States through fraud or misrepresentation.

A section 212(i) waiver of the bar to admission resulting from section 212(a)(6)(C) of the Act is dependent first upon a showing that the bar imposes an extreme hardship to the U.S. citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent. Hardship to the applicant is not considered in section 212(i) waiver proceedings unless it causes hardship to a qualifying relative, in this case the applicant's spouse. Once extreme hardship is established, it is but one favorable factor to be considered in the determination of whether the Secretary should exercise discretion. *See Matter of Mendez*, 21 I&N Dec. 296 (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.

In the present case, the record reflects that the applicant is a 49 year-old native and citizen of Ghana. The applicant's spouse is a 29 year-old native and citizen of the United States. The applicant is currently residing with his spouse and child in Fairfax, Virginia.

Counsel for the applicant asserts that the applicant's spouse is a recovering drug abuser and needs his help in battling her addiction. Counsel contends that the loss of the applicant's support could cause the applicant's spouse to relapse. The applicant's spouse submitted a letter, dated February 6, 2007, stating that she went to an inpatient prescription drug rehabilitation program for a problem that she had and that it would jeopardize her recovery if the applicant were not with her. It is noted that the record contains insurance documentation indicating that the applicant's spouse used the applicant's health insurance benefits. The record does not contain medical documentation concerning the type of treatment received by the applicant's spouse or any updated information concerning her current condition. Absent an explanation from a treating physician of the nature and severity of any condition and a description of any treatment or family assistance needed, the AAO is not in the position to reach conclusions concerning the severity of a medical condition or the treatment needed.

The applicant's spouse asserts that she receives health insurance through the applicant's employer and that she is not employed so that she can obtain her GED and seek a better-paying position. The applicant's spouse also asserts that she takes care of her son, and daycare would cost her 250 dollars per week. As noted, the applicant's spouse's letter was submitted on February 6, 2007; the record does not contain any updated information concerning the applicant's spouse's education or employment status. The record reflects that the applicant's spouse was previously employed and there is no indication that the applicant's spouse would be unable to obtain employment. There is insufficient evidence that the applicant's spouse would be unable to meet her financial obligations if she were separated from the applicant. The applicant's spouse also contends that her mother

would be unable to help her, if needed, because she is a disabled veteran from the Air Force. However, it is noted that the applicant's spouse's mother submitted a letter indicating that she is employed in Washington, DC. There is no other information concerning the financial status of the applicant's spouse's mother or sisters or whether they could and would provide assistance to the applicant's spouse, as necessary. The record indicates that the applicant's spouse's mother provides her with babysitting assistance, as she stays with the applicant's spouse's family three to four times a week because of her work schedule in Washington, DC. The record also indicates that the applicant's spouse's sister moved into the applicant's spouse's home to care for her son when the applicant's spouse was attending a rehabilitation program. Going on record without supporting documentary evidence generally is not sufficient for purposes of meeting the burden of proof in these proceedings. See *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)). There is insufficient evidence in the record, in the aggregate, to find that the applicant's spouse would suffer extreme hardship upon separation from the applicant.

Counsel for the applicant asserts that the applicant's spouse cannot relocate to Ghana because her child's birth father would not allow her child to accompany her. Counsel further asserts that the separation from her family would cause the applicant's spouse to relapse. As noted, the record does not contain medical documentation concerning the applicant's condition, either from the time she entered a drug rehabilitation program in or prior to 2007, or the present. The record also does not contain any supporting documentation indicating that the applicant's spouse's child's birth father would not allow their child to accompany the applicant's spouse to Ghana. The record does not contain any legal documentation relating to custody of the applicant's spouse's child or any statement from the child's birth father.

It is noted that the applicant's spouse is a native of the United States and the record contains indications that she has family relationships in the United States, including her mother and siblings. The record does not contain any other information concerning the applicant's spouse's ties to the United States and the applicant's spouse, in her letter, does not address any hardship she would face upon relocation to Ghana. The record contains background country condition information concerning Ghana, and it is noted that the U.S. Department of State has not issued any travel warning concerning travel to Ghana. There is insufficient evidence in the record to show that the hardships faced by the applicant's spouse, in the aggregate, would rise to the level of extreme hardship if she relocated to Ghana.

Although the depth of concern and anxiety over the applicant's family's circumstances is neither doubted nor minimized, the fact remains that Congress provided for a waiver of inadmissibility only under limited circumstances. While the prospect of separation or involuntary relocation nearly always results in considerable hardship to individuals and families, in specifically limiting the availability of a waiver of inadmissibility to cases of "extreme hardship," Congress did not intend that a waiver be granted in every case where a qualifying relationship exists. U.S. court decisions have repeatedly held that the common results of removal are insufficient to prove extreme hardship. See *Hassan v. INS*, 927 F.2d 465, 468 (9th Cir. 1991), *Perez v. INS*, 96 F.3d 390 (9th Cir. 1996); *Matter of Pilch*, 21 I&N Dec. 627 (BIA 1996) (holding that emotional

hardship caused by severing family and community ties is a common result of deportation and does not constitute extreme hardship); *Matter of Shaughnessy*, 12 I&N Dec. 810 (BIA 1968) (holding that separation of family members and financial difficulties alone do not establish extreme hardship). “[O]nly in cases of great actual or prospective injury . . . will the bar be removed.” *Matter of Ngai*, 19 I&N Dec. 245, 246 (BIA 1984).

In this case, the record does not contain sufficient evidence to show that the hardships faced by the qualifying relative, considered in the aggregate, rise beyond the common results of removal or inadmissibility to the level of extreme hardship. The AAO therefore finds that the applicant has failed to establish extreme hardship to his U.S. citizen spouse as required under section 212(i) of the Act. As the applicant has not established extreme hardship to a qualifying family member, no purpose would be served in determining whether the applicant merits a waiver as a matter of discretion.

In application proceedings, it is the applicant's burden to establish eligibility for the immigration benefit sought. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, that burden has not been met.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.