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U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)  
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U.S. Citizenship  
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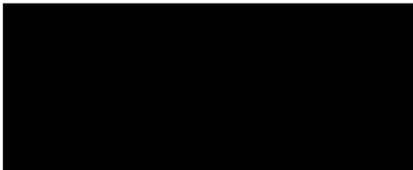
Office: LOS ANGELES

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IN RE: 

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

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.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied by us in reaching our decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. The specific requirements for filing such a request can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. All motions must be submitted to the office that originally decided your case by filing a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires that any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,

<sup>f31</sup> Perry Rhew  
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The waiver application was denied by the District Director, Los Angeles, California. 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 Mexico who was found to be inadmissible to the United States pursuant to section 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(2)(A)(i)(I), as an alien convicted of crimes involving moral turpitude. The applicant has two U.S. citizen children and seeks a waiver of inadmissibility in order to reside in the United States.

In a decision dated April 9, 2007, the district director found that the applicant had failed to establish extreme hardship to his U.S. citizen children as a result of his inadmissibility and that the record did not indicate that he had been rehabilitated. The application was denied accordingly.

In a brief on appeal, counsel states that none of the applicant's criminal convictions render him inadmissible and no waiver should be required. In the event that a waiver is required, counsel states that the evidence provided establishes that the applicant has been rehabilitated, that the district director failed to weigh family factors in her decision, and that hardship to other family members should have been considered in the context that it would then cause hardship to the qualifying family members.

Section 212(a)(2)(A) of the Act states in pertinent part:

- (i) [A]ny alien convicted of, or who admits having committed, or who admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of-
  - (I) a crime involving moral turpitude . . . or an attempt or conspiracy to commit such a crime . . . is inadmissible.

The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) held in *Matter of Perez-Contreras*, 20 I&N Dec. 615, 617-18 (BIA 1992), that:

[M]oral turpitude is a nebulous concept, which refers generally to conduct that shocks the public conscience as being inherently base, vile, or depraved, contrary to the rules of morality and the duties owed between man and man, either one's fellow man or society in general....

In determining whether a crime involves moral turpitude, we consider whether the act is accompanied by a vicious motive or corrupt mind. Where knowing or intentional conduct is an element of an offense, we have found moral turpitude to be present. However, where the required mens rea may not be determined from the statute, moral turpitude does not inhere.

(Citations omitted.)

To determine if a crime involves moral turpitude, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals first applies the categorical approach. *Nunez v. Holder*, 594 F.3d 1124, 1129 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2010) (citing *Nicanor-Romero v. Mukasey*, 523 F.3d 992, 999 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.2008)). This approach requires analyzing the elements of the crime to determine whether all of the proscribed conduct involves moral turpitude. *Nicanor-Romero, supra* at 999. In *Nicanor-Romero*, the Ninth Circuit states that in making this determination there must be "a realistic probability, not a theoretical possibility, that the statute would be applied to reach conduct that did not involve moral turpitude. *Id.* at 1004 (quoting *Gonzales v. Duenas-Alvarez*, 549 U.S. 183, 193 (2007)). A realistic probability can be established by showing that, in at least one other case, which includes the alien's own case, the state courts applied the statute to conduct that did not involve moral turpitude. *Id.* at 1004-05. *See also Matter of Silva-Trevino*, 24 I&N Dec. 687 (A.G. 2008) (whether an offense categorically involves moral turpitude requires reviewing the criminal statute to determine if there is a "realistic probability, not a theoretical possibility," that the statute would be applied to conduct that is not morally turpitudinous).

However, if a case exists in which the criminal statute in question was applied to conduct that does not involve moral turpitude, "the adjudicator cannot categorically treat all convictions under that statute as convictions for crimes that involve moral turpitude." 24 I&N Dec. at 697 (citing *Duenas-Alvarez*, 549 U.S. at 185-88, 193). An adjudicator then engages in a second-stage inquiry in which the adjudicator reviews the "record of conviction" to determine if the conviction was based on conduct involving moral turpitude. *Id.* at 698-699, 703-704, 708. The record of conviction consists of documents such as the indictment, the judgment of conviction, jury instructions, a signed guilty plea, and the plea transcript. *Id.* at 698, 704, 708.

If review of the record of conviction is inconclusive, an adjudicator then considers any additional evidence deemed necessary or appropriate to resolve accurately the moral turpitude question. 24 I&N Dec. at 699-704, 708-709. However, this "does not mean that the parties would be free to present any and all evidence bearing on an alien's conduct leading to the conviction. (citation omitted). The sole purpose of the inquiry is to ascertain the nature of the prior conviction; it is not an invitation to relitigate the conviction itself." *Id.* at 703.

The record indicates that the applicant has a record of five convictions. On [REDACTED] applicant was charged with assault with a deadly weapon in violation of California Penal Code (C.P.C.) § 245(A)(1). On [REDACTED] the court ordered the complaint to be amended to include a second charge of battery in violation of C.P.C. § 242. On the same day the applicant pled nolo contendere to the battery charge and the charge for assault with a deadly weapon was dismissed. The applicant served four days in jail and was sentenced to two years probation. [REDACTED] the applicant was charged with two counts of burglary under C.P.C. § 459. [REDACTED] the applicant was found guilty on both counts of burglary and sentenced to thirty days in jail and three years probation. [REDACTED] the applicant was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol in violation of § 23152(B) of the California Vehicle Code. [REDACTED] he was convicted of this charge. [REDACTED] the applicant was charged with theft under C.P.C. § 484(A) and on [REDACTED] he was convicted of the charge and sentenced to one day in jail and three years probation.

We note that a conviction driving under the influence of alcohol has been found to not be a crime involving moral turpitude. The BIA indicated in *Matter of Lopez-Meza*, 22 I&N Dec. 1188 (BIA 1999), that simple DWI would not likely be a crime involving moral turpitude. *See also, Matter of Torres-Varela*, 23 I&N Dec. 78 (BIA 2001). (DUI with two or more prior DUI convictions is not a crime involving moral turpitude).

In addition, battery has been found to be a crime involving moral turpitude when serious bodily injury or use of a deadly weapon is an element of the statute. *See Guillen-Garcia v. INS*, 999 F.2d 199 (7th Cir. 1993) and *Garcia-Meza v. Mukasey*, 516 F.3d 535 (7th Cir. 2008).

In regards to the applicant's burglary conviction, the BIA has maintained that the determinative factor in assessing whether burglary involves moral turpitude is whether the crime intended to be committed at the time of entry or prior to the breaking out involves moral turpitude. *Matter of M-*, 2 I&N Dec. 721, 723 (BIA 1946). For example, the BIA has held that burglary with intent to commit theft is a crime involving moral turpitude. *See Matter of Frentescu*, 18 I&N Dec. 244 (BIA 1982). The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, under which this case arises, has similarly held that burglary with the intent to commit theft is a crime involving moral turpitude. *See Cuevas-Gaspar v. Gonzales*, 430 F.3d 1013, 1020 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2005) ("Because the underlying crime of theft or larceny is a crime of moral turpitude, unlawfully entering a residence with intent to commit theft or larceny therein is likewise a crime involving moral turpitude.").

At the time of the applicant's conviction, Cal. Penal Code § 459 provided, in pertinent part:

Every person who enters any house, room, apartment, tenement, shop, warehouse, store, mill, barn, stable, outhouse or other building, tent, vessel, railroad car, locked or sealed cargo container, whether or not mounted on a vehicle, trailer coach, as defined in Section 635 of the Vehicle Code, any house car, as defined in Section 362 of the Vehicle Code, inhabited camper, as defined in Section 243 of the Vehicle Code, vehicle as defined by the Vehicle Code when the doors of such vehicle are locked, aircraft as defined by the Harbors and Navigation Code, mine or any underground portion thereof, with intent to commit grand or petit larceny or any felony is guilty of burglary. As used in this chapter, "inhabited" means currently being used for dwelling purposes, whether occupied or not.

Counsel asserts that the applicant's burglary convictions do not state what the underlying crimes were, so it cannot be determined whether the convictions are for crimes of moral turpitude or not. The AAO finds that although counsel is correct in his assertions, the burden is upon the applicant to prove that he is admissible and in accordance with the modified categorical approach, the record of conviction should have been submitted in order to ascertain whether the applicant's burglary convictions were for crimes involving moral turpitude. *See* section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Other than the final dispositions of the applicant's convictions, the record does not include the record of conviction for the applicant's burglary convictions or documentation indicating that the record of conviction is unavailable. Absent such evidence the AAO cannot make a finding that the applicant's

convictions were not for crimes involving moral turpitude. Again, the burden is upon the applicant to prove that he is admissible to the United States, thus based on the current record the AAO finds that the applicant's burglary convictions are for crimes involving moral turpitude.

Finally, the AAO finds that the applicant's conviction for theft is also a crime involving moral turpitude. At the time of the applicant's conviction, Cal. Penal Code § 484(a) provided, in pertinent part:

Every person who shall feloniously steal, take, carry, lead, or drive away the personal property of another, or who shall fraudulently appropriate property which has been entrusted to him, or who shall knowingly and designedly, by any false or fraudulent representation or pretense, defraud any other person of money, labor or real or personal property, or who causes or procures others to report falsely of his wealth or mercantile character and by thus imposing upon any person, obtains credit and thereby fraudulently gets or obtains possession of money, or property or obtains the labor or service of another, is guilty of theft. . . .

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in *Castillo-Cruz v. Holder* determined that petty theft under Cal. Penal Code § 484(a) requires the specific intent to deprive the victim of his or her property permanently, and is therefore a crime categorically involving moral turpitude. 581 F.3d 1154, 1160 (9th Cir. 2009). In view of the holding in *Castillo-Cruz*, we find that the applicant's conviction for theft constitutes a crime involving moral turpitude.

Therefore, the applicant is inadmissible under section 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) of the Act.

Section 212(h) of the Act provides, in pertinent part:

The Attorney General [Secretary of Homeland Security] may, in his discretion, waive the application of subparagraph (A)(i)(I) . . . of subsection (a)(2) . . . if -

(1) (A) in the case of any immigrant it is established to the satisfaction of the Attorney General [Secretary] that --

(i) . . . the activities for which the alien is inadmissible occurred more than 15 years before the date of the alien's application for a visa, admission, or adjustment of status,

(ii) the admission to the United States of such alien would not be contrary to the national welfare, safety, or security of the United States, and

(iii) the alien has been rehabilitated; or

(B) in the case of an immigrant who is the spouse, parent, son, or daughter of a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence if it is established to the satisfaction of the Attorney General [Secretary] that the alien's denial of admission

would result in extreme hardship to the United States citizen or lawfully resident spouse, parent, son, or daughter of such alien . . . ; and

(2) the Attorney General [Secretary], in his discretion, and pursuant to such terms, conditions and procedures as he may by regulations prescribe, has consented to the alien's applying or reapplying for a visa, for admission to the United States, or adjustment of status.

Section 212(h)(1)(A) of the Act provides that the Secretary may, in her discretion, waive the application of subparagraph (A)(i)(I) of subsection (a)(2) if the activities for which the applicant is inadmissible occurred more than 15 years before the date of the applicant's application for a visa, admission, or adjustment of status. An application for admission to the United States is a continuing application, and admissibility is determined on the basis of the facts and the law at the time the application is finally considered. *Matter of Alarcon*, 20 I&N Dec. 557, 562 (BIA 1992).

Since the applicant's conviction for which the applicant was found inadmissible occurred less than 15 years ago, his inadmissibility cannot be waived under section 212(h)(1)(A) of the Act. However, the applicant is eligible to apply for a waiver under section 212(h)(1)(B) of the Act.

A waiver of inadmissibility under section 212(h) 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, parent, son or daughter of the applicant. Hardship to the applicant can be considered only insofar as it results in hardship to a qualifying relative. The applicant's two children are the only qualifying relatives in this case. 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 record of hardship includes: counsel’s brief, a psychological assessment, a letter from the applicant’s employer, a letter from the applicant’s church, and a certificate of completion for an alcohol and drug program.

In her brief, dated May 4, 2007, counsel states that one of the central purposes of the waiver application is unification of families and that the legislative history of the Act indicates that Congress intended to provide for a liberal treatment of children and was concerned with keeping families together. Counsel states that in a psychological assessment, [REDACTED] finds that the applicant’s children, if separated from the applicant, are at risk for abuse, emotional problems from abandonment, and a total disruption of their healthy life. Counsel also states that if the applicant takes his children to Mexico with him, their education in Mexico will be unlikely to continue past six years

and when they return to the United States they will have had an inadequate education, no vocational training, and little opportunity for financial success.

The record indicates that the applicant's children are ten and nine years old. The record does not indicate who their other caretakers are, if any, where their mother is, their level of Spanish language fluency, and/or their exposure to Mexican culture. All of these factors are indicative of whether the applicant's children would suffer extreme hardship as a result of the applicant's inadmissibility. Furthermore, the record does not contain any documentation to support counsel's statements regarding education in Mexico.

In addition, counsel asserts that the applicant has been rehabilitated. In support of this assertion the record includes: statements from [REDACTED] stating that he believes the applicant has learned from his mistakes, has matured, learned to control his impulses, and is not a threat to the safety of the community; a letter from the applicant's employer showing that the applicant has worked with their company for 16 years; a letter from the applicant's church stating that the applicant attends mass every Sunday and is an active member of a Hispanic prayer group; and evidence that the applicant participated in an alcohol rehabilitation program.

A review of the documentation in the record fails to establish the existence of extreme hardship to the applicant's children caused by the applicant's inadmissibility to the United States. The record lacks the detail necessary to determine whether the applicant's children would suffer extreme hardship as a result of their father's inadmissibility or the documentation to support any assertions regarding the potential for hardship. 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)). Without documentary evidence to support the claim, the assertions of counsel will not satisfy the petitioner's burden of proof. The unsupported assertions of counsel do not constitute evidence. *Matter of Obaigbena*, 19 I&N Dec. 533, 534 (BIA 1988); *Matter of Laureano*, 19 I&N Dec. 1 (BIA 1983); *Matter of Ramirez-Sanchez*, 17 I&N Dec. 503, 506 (BIA 1980).

The AAO notes that the applicant has submitted documentation of rehabilitation, but having found the applicant statutorily ineligible for relief, no purpose would be served in discussing whether he merits a waiver as a matter of discretion.

In proceedings for application for waiver of grounds of inadmissibility under section 212(h) of the Act, the burden of proving eligibility remains entirely with the applicant. *See* section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, the applicant has not met that burden. Accordingly, the appeal will be dismissed.

**ORDER:** The appeal is dismissed.