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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Administrative Appeals MS 2090
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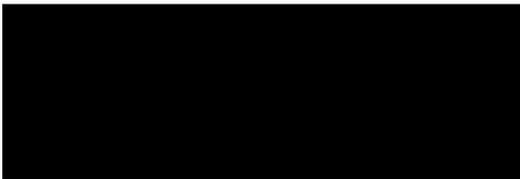
Office: SPOKANE, WA
(RELATES)

Date: FEB 20 2010

IN RE: 

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)

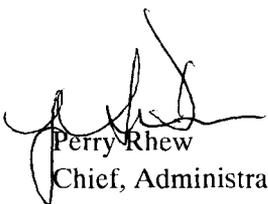
ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



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.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. Please refer to 8 C.F.R. § 103.5 for the specific requirements. 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 \$585. Any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen, as required by 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i).



Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Field Office Director, Spokane Washington, denied the Application for Permission to Reapply for Admission into the United States after Deportation or Removal (Form I-212) and it 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, on June 11, 1997, was placed into immigration proceedings for having entered the United States without inspection in January 1996. On July 16, 1997, the immigration judge ordered the applicant removed from the United States. On July 19, 1997, the applicant was removed from the United States and returned to Mexico.

On September 19, 2001, the applicant filed an Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (Form I-485) based on an approved Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130) filed on his behalf by his U.S. citizen spouse. During an interview in regard to the Form I-485, the applicant admitted that he had been removed from the United States and that he reentered the United States roughly three days after his removal. On May 24, 2002, the Form I-485 was denied. On August 20, 2002, a Notice of Intent/Decision to Reinstate Prior Order (Form I-871) was issued pursuant to section 241(a)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a)(5). On August 23, 2002, the applicant was removed from the United States and returned to Mexico.

On July 27, 2007, the applicant filed a second Form I-485 based on the Form I-130. The applicant indicated that he reentered the United States without inspection in 2002. On the same day, the applicant filed an Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility (Form I-601) and the Form I-212, indicating that he resided in the United States. On June 30, 2009, the Form I-485 and Form I-601 were denied. The applicant is inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(A)(ii) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(A)(ii) for a period of twenty years. 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, one U.S. citizen stepchild and one U.S. citizen child.

The field office director determined that the applicant is inadmissible pursuant to section 212(a)(9)(C)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(C)(i), for illegally reentering the United States after having been removed. The field office director determined that the applicant was not eligible to apply for permission to reapply for admission because he had not remained outside the United States for the required ten years. The field office director denied the Form I-212 accordingly. *See Field Office Director's Decision*, dated June 30, 2009.

On appeal, counsel contends that a gross miscarriage of justice would result from applying a facially invalid reinstatement order.¹ Counsel contends that the field office director erred in retroactively applying *Gonzales v. DHS (Gonzales II)*, when the applicant, in filing the Form I-212, relied upon the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (Ninth Circuit) decision in *Perez-Gonzalez v. Ashcroft*, 379 F.3d 783 (9th Cir. 2004). *See Counsel's Brief*, dated August 21, 2009. In support of his contentions, counsel submits only the referenced brief. The entire record was reviewed in rendering a decision in this case.

¹The AAO has no authority to review the legal sufficiency of removal orders that are reinstated pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 241.8.

Section 212(a)(9) 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.
- (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 who 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 on a 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 alien's reembarkation at a place outside the United States or attempt to be admitted from foreign contiguous territory, the [Secretary of Homeland Security] has consented to the alien's reapplying for admission. [emphasis added]

....

(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 [Secretary] has consented to the alien's reapplying for admission.

(iii) Waiver

The Secretary of Homeland Security may waive the application of clause (i) in the case of an alien who is a VAWA self-petitioner if there is a connection between—

- (1) the alien's battering or subjection to extreme cruelty; and
- (2) the alien's removal, departure from the United States, reentry or reentries into the United States; or attempted reentry into the United States.

The AAO notes that a waiver to the section 212(a)(9)(C)(i) ground of inadmissibility is available to individuals classified as battered spouses under the cited sections of section 204 of the Act. *See also* 8 U.S.C. § 1154. There are no indications in the record that the applicant is or should be classified as such.

An alien who is inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(C)(i) of the Act may not apply for consent to reapply unless he or she has *remained outside* the United States for more than 10 years since the date of the alien's last departure from the United States. *See Matter of Torres-Garcia*, 23 I&N Dec. 866 (BIA 2006); *Matter of Briones*, 24 I&N Dec. 355 (BIA 2007); and *Matter of Diaz and Lopez*, 25 I&N Dec. 188 (BIA 2010). Thus, to avoid inadmissibility under section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act, it must be the case that the applicant's last departure was at least ten years ago, the applicant has remained outside the United States since that departure, *and* that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has consented to the applicant's reapplying for admission. The applicant's last departure from the United States occurred on August 23, 2002, less than ten years ago, he has not remained outside the United States since that departure and he is currently in the United States.² The applicant is currently statutorily ineligible to apply for permission to reapply for admission.

On appeal, counsel contends that the Ninth Circuit's decision in *Gonzales v. DHS* is impermissibly retroactively and fundamentally unfair and that the applicant, in filing the Form I-212, relied upon the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (Ninth Circuit) decision in *Perez-Gonzalez v. Ashcroft*.

The applicant's Form I-212 was filed while an injunction restraining USCIS from applying agency policy as set forth in *Matter of Torres-Garcia* had been issued. The AAO finds, therefore, that in

² The applicant will be required to submit evidence establishing that he is currently outside the United States and has remained outside the United States for period of ten years when he becomes eligible to apply for permission to reapply for admission.

filing the Form I-212 under such circumstances, counsel's contention that the applicant reasonably relied upon the Ninth Circuit's *Perez-Gonzalez v. Ashcroft* decision is illogical.

The Ninth Circuit, in deferring to the BIA's decision in *Matter of Torres-Garcia*, found that the BIA's findings were reasonable and that the statute is unambiguous and unchanged since its promulgation. While the Ninth Circuit found that its decision in *Perez-Gonzalez v. Ashcroft* was based on a finding of statutory ambiguity that left room for agency discretion, the court also found that the issue might have been resolved under the first step of *Chevron USA, Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council*, 467 U.S. 87, 104 S. Ct. 2778, 81 L. Ed. 2d 694 (1984), by examining the text of the relevant statutes and their legislative histories. The court concluded that, by declining to adhere to the plain language of the inadmissibility provision and instead falling back on the regulations, *Perez Gonzalez* did not find the inadmissibility provision or the statutory scheme to be unambiguous. It is on this basis that the court found that it was not bound by the decision in *Perez Gonzalez* and must defer to *Torres Garcia*, while, at the same time, finding that the statute itself is unambiguous. In *Matter of Torres-Garcia*, the BIA found that 8 C.F.R. § 212.2 was not promulgated to implement the current section 212(a)(9) of the Act and that the very concept of retroactive permission to reapply for admission, i.e., permission requested after unlawful reentry, contradicts the clear language of section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act, which in its own right makes unlawful reentry after removal a ground of inadmissibility that can only be waived by the passage of at least ten years. The BIA found that the *Perez-Gonzalez v. Ashcroft* decision contradicts the clear language of the statute and the legislative policy underlying the statute in general. The statute clearly states that an alien who has been ordered removed and enters or attempts to reenter the United States without being admitted may seek an exception to permanent grounds of inadmissibility when seeking admission more than ten years after the date of the alien's last departure from the United States, if, the applicant receives permission to reapply for admission prior to reentering the United States.³ Since the statute is unambiguous and has been in effect since April 1, 1997, counsel's contention that the correct application of the statute is impermissibly retroactive and fundamentally unfair is unfounded since the applicant's removal, unlawful reentry and filing of the Form I-212 occurred after the statute's enactment.

Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361, provides that the burden of proof is upon the applicant to establish that he is eligible for the benefit sought. The applicant in the instant case does not qualify for an exception or waiver under section 212(a)(9)(C)(ii) and (iii) of the Act. Thus, as a matter of law, the applicant is not eligible for approval of a Form I-212. Accordingly, the appeal will be dismissed as a matter of discretion.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.

³ The AAO notes that the reentry after obtaining permission to reapply for admission must be a lawful admission to the United States; otherwise, the applicant has again illegally reentered the United States after having been removed and renewed his or her inadmissibility under section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act.