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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Administrative Appeals
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Washington, DC 20529-2090



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**



H5

DATE: APR 03 2012

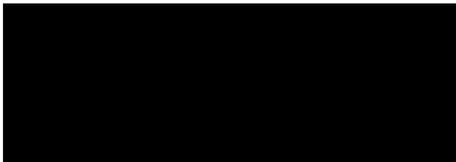
OFFICE: DENVER

FILE: 

IN RE: 

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,



Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The waiver application was denied by the Field Office Director, Denver, Colorado, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be sustained and the waiver application will be approved.

The applicant is a native and citizen of Mexico who entered the United States in February 2001 with an alien registration card belonging to her cousin. The Field Office Director found the applicant 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 having procured entry to the United States by fraud or willful misrepresentation. The applicant is a self-petitioner under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) who seeks a waiver of inadmissibility in order to reside in the United States with her U.S. citizen 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 February 5, 2010.

On appeal, counsel for the applicant asserts that the applicant has demonstrated that she and her U.S. citizen children would experience extreme hardship if her waiver of inadmissibility is denied. Counsel further states that the denial decision in this matter did not recognize the correct waiver standard based upon the applicant's VAWA petitioner status.

In support of the waiver application and appeal, the applicant submitted a letter, documentation concerning her sons' education and medical conditions, a letter concerning the applicant's therapy, and identity documents. 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 or, in the case of a VAWA self-petitioner, the alien

demonstrates extreme hardship to the alien or the alien's United States citizen, lawful permanent resident, or qualified alien parent or child.

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 reflects that the applicant is a twenty-nine year-old native and citizen of Mexico. The applicant is currently residing with her two children in ██████████ Colorado.

Counsel for the applicant asserts that the applicant escaped from an abusive relationship with her U.S. citizen ex-husband and that she is currently undergoing therapy as a result. Counsel further states that the applicant lives nearby her entire family in the United States, including her mother and siblings. It is noted that the applicant's G-325A reflects that her mother and father are currently residing in Colorado Springs, Colorado. In support of counsel's assertions, the applicant submitted a letter from a social worker reflecting that the applicant has been in therapy since 2003 and treated for post-traumatic stress disorder based on her prior relationship with her abusive husband.

Counsel for the applicant contends that the applicant no longer has any family, friends, or ties in Mexico. It is noted that the applicant is currently employed in the United States. The applicant also states that she was living in Michoacán in Mexico and that she would fear for her life if she returned, due to drug-related violence. It is noted that the Department of State recently released travel warnings concerning the Michoacán area:

You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Michoacán except the cities of Morelia and Lázaro Cardenas where you should exercise caution. Flying into Morelia and Lázaro Cardenas, or driving to Lázaro Cardenas via highway 200 from Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa, are the recommended methods of travel. Attacks on Mexican government officials, law enforcement and military personnel, and other incidents of TCO-related violence, have occurred throughout Michoacán.

Travel Warning-Mexico, U.S. Department of State, dated February 8, 2012.

The applicant asserts that she would also fear for the safety of her sons if they relocated to Mexico, so that she would be forced to leave her children behind if she departed. Counsel for the applicant contends that the applicant's sons have never visited Mexico. The record also contains a letter from a social worker indicating that the applicant's sons have both been in counseling, on and off, since March 2, 2008. The letter states that one of the applicant's sons suffers from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and the other suffered from adjustment disorder, so that stability and consistency are in the best interest of her children. The applicant

also submitted a prescription for Concerta, which her son takes for his ADHD. Based upon the applicant's psychological condition resulting from a history of abuse, country conditions in Mexico, the applicant's ties in the United States, and the psychological conditions suffered by her children, it is determined that the applicant has established that she would suffer extreme hardship if she returned to Mexico.

Considered in the aggregate, the applicant has established that she would face extreme hardship if her waiver request is denied. Extreme hardship is a requirement for eligibility, but once established it is but one favorable discretionary factor to be considered. *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996). For waivers of inadmissibility, the burden is on the applicant to establish that a grant of a waiver of inadmissibility is warranted in the exercise of discretion. *Id.* at 299. The adverse factors evidencing an alien's undesirability as a permanent resident must be balanced with the social and humane considerations presented on her behalf to determine whether the grant of relief in the exercise of discretion appears to be in the best interests of this country. *Id.* at 300.

The AAO notes that *Matter of Marin*, 16 I & N Dec. 581 (BIA 1978), involving a section 212(c) waiver, is used in waiver cases as guidance for balancing favorable and unfavorable factors and this cross application of standards is supported by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). In *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, the BIA, assessing the exercise of discretion under section 212(h) of the Act, stated:

We find this use of *Matter of Marin, supra*, as a general guide to be appropriate. For the most part, it is prudent to avoid cross application, as between different types of relief, of particular principles or standards for the exercise of discretion. *Id.* However, our reference to *Matter of Marin, supra*, is only for the purpose of the approach taken in that case regarding the balancing of favorable and unfavorable factors within the context of the relief being sought under section 212(h)(1)(B) of the Act. *See, e.g., Palmer v. INS*, 4 F.3d 482 (7th Cir.1993) (balancing of discretionary factors under section 212(h)). We find this guidance to be helpful and applicable, given that both forms of relief address the question of whether aliens with criminal records should be admitted to the United States and allowed to reside in this country permanently.

Matter of Mendez-Moralez at 300.

In *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, in evaluating whether section 212(h)(1)(B) relief is warranted in the exercise of discretion, the BIA stated that:

The factors adverse to the applicant 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, recency and seriousness, and the presence of other evidence indicative of an 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 the alien began his 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 and service to 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). . . .

Id. at 301.

The BIA further states that upon review of the record as a whole, a balancing of the equities and adverse matters must be made to determine whether discretion should be favorably exercised. The equities that the applicant for section 212(h)(1)(B) relief must bring forward to establish that he merits a favorable exercise of administrative discretion will depend in each case on the nature and circumstances of the ground of exclusion sought to be waived and on the presence of any additional adverse matters, and as the negative factors grow more serious, it becomes incumbent upon the applicant to introduce additional offsetting favorable evidence. *Id.* at 301.

The favorable factors include the extreme hardships the applicant would suffer if her waiver application were denied; the hardships that her children would experience whether they remained in the United States or accompanied the applicant in Mexico; the applicant's ties in the United States; gainful employment in the United States; and the passage of over ten years since the applicant's misrepresentation. The unfavorable factors in this matter include the applicant's misrepresentation in an attempt to procure entry into the United States and evidence that she was convicted of Driving While Ability Impaired on April 24, 2010.

Although the applicant's violations of immigration law cannot be condoned, the positive factors in this case outweigh the negative factors. In these proceedings, the burden of establishing eligibility for the waiver rests entirely with the applicant. *See* section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. In this case, the applicant has met her burden and the appeal will be sustained.

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