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



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



#5

DATE: **AUG 01 2012** OFFICE: **SANTO DOMINGO** FILE:

IN RE:

APPLICATION: Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility pursuant to section 212(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(i) and section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(B)(v)

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

SELF--REPRESENTED

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 AAO inappropriately applied the law in reaching its decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen in accordance with the instructions on Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. The specific requirements for filing such a motion can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. **Do not file any motion directly with the AAO.** Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires any motion to be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,

Perry Rhew, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

unless it causes hardship to a qualifying relative, in this case the applicant's spouse. 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-Morales*, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996).

The AAO notes that the record also indicates that on August 17, 2009, the applicant was arrested for Larceny over \$250, in violation of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 266 § 60. A letter from Probation Officer Joyce Feeney of the Trial Court of the Commonwealth in Framingham, MA dated November 16, 2009 indicates that the applicant was participating in pre-trial probation in connection with her arrest. The letter indicates that the applicant "has fully complied with the terms imposed by the Court," but there is no final disposition from the court in the record.

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

- (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 (other than a purely political offense) or an attempt or conspiracy to commit such a crime ... is inadmissible.
 - (ii) Exception.--Clause (i)(I) shall not apply to an alien who committed only one crime if-
 - (I) the crime was committed when the alien was under 18 years of age, and the crime was committed (and the alien was released from any confinement to a prison or correctional institution imposed for the crime) more than 5 years before the date of the application for a visa or other documentation and the date of application for admission to the United States, or
 - (II) the maximum penalty possible for the crime of which the alien was convicted (or which the alien admits having committed or of which the acts that the alien admits having committed constituted the essential elements) did not exceed imprisonment for one year and, if the alien was convicted of such crime, the alien was not sentenced to a term of imprisonment in excess of 6 months (regardless of the extent to which the sentence was ultimately executed).

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.

The applicant has not submitted a full record of conviction for her arrest. This documentation should be submitted in any future proceedings, so that a determination can be made concerning her admissibility in regards to section 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) of the Act. The AAO does not need to make a determination on that matter at this time, as the applicant is separately inadmissible under sections 212(a)(6)(C) and 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act.

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 deportation, 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, 885 (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.

On appeal, the applicant’s spouse states that he is suffering extreme hardship as a result of his separation from the applicant. In particular, he states that the cumulative hardship that he is suffering raising his two sons alone is causing him financial and emotional hardship. Additionally, he states that his son’s medical condition further exacerbates that hardship. The applicant submitted a letter from Dr. Jessica Roth, MD, dated November 19, 2009, stating that her now seven-year-old son Michael underwent surgery after prolonged ear and sinus infections. The letter states that the doctor will further evaluate the child’s hearing and vision if he is able to return to the United States. This letter gives the impression that the child is residing in the Dominican Republic with the applicant. There is no indication in the record that the child has been evaluated by a physician in the Dominican Republic. As noted above, Congress did not include hardship to an alien’s children as a factor to be considered in assessing extreme hardship under section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) or 212(i) of the Act. In the present case, the applicant’s spouse is the only qualifying relative for the waiver, and hardship to the applicant’s child will not be separately considered, except as it may affect the applicant’s spouse. There is not sufficient information in the record to make a determination regarding the applicant’s child’s present medical condition and the effect that medical condition is having on the applicant’s spouse. Additionally, the applicant’s spouse states that he is suffering from financial hardship due to the need to maintain two households, one in the United States and the other in the Dominican Republic. The record; however, does not contain any documentation regarding the applicant’s current spouse’s financial situation, his expenses or the applicant’s income and expenses in the Dominican Republic. The only financial records submitted by the applicant consist of tax returns from 2004-2006, a bank

statement from 2006, and a letter from the applicant's spouse's employer dated June 12, 2007 stating that the applicant worked 40 hours a week, earning \$10.00 per hour. It is not possible to make a determination regarding the financial hardship to the applicant's spouse as a result of his separation from the applicant based on this limited information. Although the applicant's assertions regarding his financial and emotional hardship are relevant and have been taken into consideration, little weight can be afforded them in the absence of supporting evidence. *See Matter of Kwan*, 14 I&N Dec. 175 (BIA 1972) ("Information in an affidavit should not be disregarded simply because it appears to be hearsay; in administrative proceedings, that fact merely affects the weight to be afforded it."). 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)). Based on the lack of evidence in the record, it is not possible to determine the degree of hardship that the applicant's spouse would experience if he were to reside in the United States separated from the applicant. Although the AAO notes the applicant's spouse's difficult situation and recognizes that the applicant's spouse would endure hardship as a result of long-term separation from the applicant, the record does not establish that the hardships he would face, considered in the aggregate, rise to the level of "extreme."

The applicant has not stated what hardships, if any; her husband would suffer if he were to relocate to reside with her in the Dominican Republic as a result of hardship directly to him or as a result of hardship to his children. The applicant's spouse is a native of the Dominican Republic, presumably speaks Spanish, and has not provided any explanation or documentation of the hardship that he would suffer if he were to return there to reside with the applicant. Based on the information provided, considered in the aggregate, the evidence does not illustrate that the hardship suffered in this case, should the applicant's spouse relocate to the Dominican Republic, would be beyond what is normally experienced by families dealing with removal or inadmissibility. *Matter of O-J-O-*, 21 I&N Dec. at 383.

Although the applicant's spouse's concern over the applicant's immigration status is neither doubted nor minimized, the fact remains that Congress provided for a waiver of inadmissibility only under limited circumstances. In nearly every qualifying relationship, whether between husband and wife or parent and child, there is a deep level of affection and a certain amount of emotional and social interdependence. While, in common parlance, 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, and thus the familial and emotional bonds, exist. The point made in this and prior decisions on this matter is that the current state of the law, viewed from a legislative, administrative, or judicial point of view, requires that the hardship, which meets the standard in sections 212(a)(9)(B)(v) and 212(i) of the Act, be above and beyond the normal, expected hardship involved in such cases.

Considered in the aggregate, the hardship to the applicant's spouse does not rise to the level of extreme beyond the common results of removal. *See Hassan v. INS*, 927 F.2d 465, 468 (9th Cir.

1991); *Perez*, 96 F.3d at 392 (defining “extreme hardship” as hardship that was unusual or beyond that which would normally be expected upon deportation); *Matter of Pilch*, 21 I&N Dec. at 631. The AAO therefore finds that the applicant has failed to establish extreme hardship to a qualifying relative as required under sections 212(a)(9)(B)(v) and 212(i) of the Act. Having found the applicant statutorily ineligible for relief, no purpose would be served in discussing whether she merits a waiver as a matter of discretion.

In proceedings for an application for waiver of grounds of inadmissibility under sections 212(a)(9)(B)(v) and 212(i) of the Act, the burden of proving eligibility remains entirely with the applicant. 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.