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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS 3090
Washington, DC 20529-2090



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

H/S

[REDACTED]

DATE: **SEP 07 2012**

OFFICE: CHICAGO, IL

FILE: [REDACTED]

IN RE: Applicant: [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 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Perry Rhew".

Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

A waiver of inadmissibility under section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) 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 or parent of the applicant. Hardship to the applicant can be considered only insofar as it results in hardship to a qualifying relative. The applicant's U.S. citizen parents 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-Morales*, 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 AAO notes that extreme hardship to a qualifying relative must be established whether the qualifying relative resides in Poland or the United States, as the qualifying relative is not required to reside outside of the United States based on the denial of the applicant's waiver request. We previously found the applicant to have demonstrated that her father would suffer extreme hardship if he resided permanently in Poland, due to his age (now 77), medical problems, and loss of an established relationship with treating physicians. On motion, counsel contends that that applicant's father will also suffer extreme hardship by remaining in the United States without the applicant.

In dismissing the applicant's prior appeal, the AAO found insufficient evidence on record that the applicant supports her father and provides for his care, or that he would lack financial support and care if she returned to Poland. Newly submitted documentary evidence shows that the applicant is employed, and, in addition, the updated record establishes that the applicant's mother, now nearly 67, stopped working in 2009 to undergo comprehensive rehabilitation therapies for weakness and recovery from respiratory problems. Whereas our prior decision was based on a lack of evidence of the applicant's employment and a record indicating her mother supported the family, new evidence supports the applicant's contention that she is the sole wage earner in the household she shares with her parents. We find the applicant to have shown that her parents' advanced age and age-related infirmities and her mother's own medical problems support her father's claim to be dependent on his daughter for daily care. Despite lack of details regarding the applicant's father's care needs, the AAO finds that his degenerative Alzheimer's condition coupled with his wife's physical limitations and lack of employment have reached the point where he would suffer extreme hardship if permanently separated from the applicant and deprived of her physical, emotional, and financial support.

The record, reviewed in its entirety and in light of the *Cervantes-Gonzalez* factors, cited above, supports a finding that the applicant's father will suffer significantly greater hardship than the disruptions and inconveniences normally resulting whenever an adult child is removed from the United States and/or refused admission and, therefore, that he will face extreme hardship if the

applicant is unable to reside in the United States. However, the grant or denial of the waiver does not turn only on the issue of the meaning of "extreme hardship." It also hinges on the discretion of the Secretary pursuant to such terms, conditions and procedures as she may by regulations prescribe.

In discretionary matters, the alien bears the burden of proving eligibility in terms of equities in the United States which are not outweighed by adverse factors. *See Matter of T-S-Y-*, 7 I&N Dec. 582 (BIA 1957).

In evaluating whether . . . relief is warranted in the exercise of discretion, the factors adverse to the alien 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 and seriousness, and the presence of other evidence indicative of the 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 alien began 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 or service in 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).

See Matter of Mendez-Moralez, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996).

The AAO must then "balance the adverse factors evidencing an alien's undesirability as a permanent resident with the social and humane considerations presented on the alien's behalf to determine whether the grant of relief in the exercise of discretion appears to be in the best interests of the country." *Id.* at 300. (Citations omitted).

The favorable factors in this matter are the extreme hardships the applicant's father would face if the applicant were to reside in Poland, regardless of whether he accompanied the applicant or remained in the United States; the applicant's lack of any criminal convictions; presence of both parents in the United States and apparent lack of family ties elsewhere; gainful employment in the United States; payment of taxes; and the passage of more than 17 years since the applicant's unlawful entry into the United States at the age of 20. The unfavorable factors in this matter are the applicant's procurement of U.S. admission by fraud and her unlawful presence and employment here.

Although the applicant's violations of the immigration laws cannot be condoned, the positive factors in this case outweigh the negative factors. Given the passage of time since the applicant's violations of immigration law, the AAO finds that a favorable exercise of discretion is warranted.

In discretionary matters, the applicant bears the full burden of proving eligibility for discretionary relief. *See Matter of Ducret*, 15 I&N Dec. 620 (BIA 1976). Here, the applicant has met that burden. Accordingly, the prior decision of the AAO will be vacated and the waiver application approved.

ORDER: The motion is granted. The prior decision of the AAO is vacated. The waiver application is approved.