

(b)(6)



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

DATE: JAN 28 2013 OFFICE: PHILADELPHIA

File: [REDACTED]

IN RE: [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 PETITIONER:
[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.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Rosenberg".

Ron Rosenberg
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The waiver application was denied by the Field Office Director, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The matter came before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal and the appeal was dismissed. The matter is again before the AAO on motion to reopen and reconsider. The motion will be granted, and the underlying application remains dismissed.

The applicant is a native and citizen of Ghana who was found 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 procuring admission into the United States through willful misrepresentation of a material fact. The applicant seeks a waiver of inadmissibility in order to reside in the United States with her U.S. citizen spouse.

The Field Office Director concluded that the applicant failed to establish that extreme hardship would be imposed on a qualifying relative and denied the Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility (Form I-601) accordingly. *See Decision of the Field Office Director*, dated November 13, 2009.

On appeal, the AAO concluded that the applicant's spouse would suffer extreme hardship based on relocation, but not separation, and dismissed the appeal accordingly. *See Decision of the Administrative Appeals Office*, dated April 24, 2012.

In response, counsel asserts that the decision by the AAO did not take into consideration the effects their separation would have on the applicant's spouse if the applicant is removed to Ghana. Counsel contends that the AAO should also consider the effects that separation would have on the applicant's spouse after he retires in two years. *See Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion* (Form I-290B), received May 25, 2012.

A motion to reopen must state the new facts to be proved in the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(2). Counsel submits statements of the applicant and the applicant's spouse addressing new facts related to the applicant's spouse's hardship. A motion to reconsider must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions to establish that the decision was based on an incorrect application of law or USCIS policy. A motion to reconsider a decision on an application must, when filed, also establish that the decision was incorrect based on the evidence of record at the time of the initial decision. 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(3).

Counsel asserts that two cases cited in the AAO's decision are "are not authoritative and cited only for comparison." Counsel, however, does not submit precedent decisions or establish that the AAO incorrectly applied law or USCIS policy. Counsel also contends that the AAO failed to consider extreme hardship that the applicant's spouse would experience upon separation from the applicant and did not consider the effect of the applicant's removal. The AAO finds that by submitting new evidence with her motion, the applicant has met the requirements of 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(2), and the motion will be granted.

The record contains, but is not limited to: Forms I-290B; counsel's memorandum; statements by the applicant and her spouse; receipts and financial documents; employment records; identification documents; and various immigration applications and forms. The entire record was reviewed in rendering a decision on motion.

Section 212(a)(6)(C) of the Act provides, in pertinent part that:

- (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.

The record reflects that the applicant entered the United States on May 27, 2003 with a valid nonimmigrant visitor visa. The applicant testified during a USCIS interview on August 18, 2009, that she intended to permanently immigrate to the United States when she applied for her nonimmigrant visitor visa and when she presented herself for inspection and admission into the United States. The applicant was therefore found to be inadmissible under section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(C)(i). Counsel does not contest the applicant's inadmissibility.

Section 212(i) of the Act states:

- (1) The Attorney General [now Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, "Secretary"] may, in the discretion of the [Secretary], waive the application of clause (i) of subsection (a)(6)(C) in the case of an alien 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 [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.

A waiver of inadmissibility under section 212(a)(2)(A)(i)(I) 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. In the present case, the applicant's spouse is her qualifying relative. 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*, 22 I&N Dec. 560, 565 (BIA 1999), the Board provided a list of factors it deemed relevant in determining whether an alien has

established extreme hardship to a qualifying relative. The factors include the presence of a lawful permanent resident or U.S. 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).

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 v. I.N.S.*, 138 F.3d 1292 (9th Cir. 1998) (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 applicant's 63-year old spouse is a native and citizen of the United States. He married the applicant on July 23, 2007. In addition to the statements and evidence considered in the applicant's previous appeal, the applicant states that staying with her husband in the United States would allow her to help him, because his hearing and vision have been reduced due to his age and his years of working with loud machinery. She states her earnings would supplement his Social Security income. The applicant's spouse notes that after he retires at age 65, he hopes to gain further employment but worries that his failing hearing and vision would prevent him from doing so. He explains that if he is not employable, he would depend on the applicant financially, though if she were in Ghana, she would depend on him instead. He notes that their separation would destroy their marriage, his retirement and the applicant's life. He laments that in this last stage of his life, he cannot imagine "facing these years without [the applicant]."

The AAO acknowledges the difficulties that the applicant and her spouse would face were they to be separated. However, evidence was not submitted regarding the applicant's retirement, his estimated Social Security income, and his health conditions. 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)). As such, the AAO finds the evidence insufficient to find extreme hardship to the applicant's spouse based on the applicant's separation from him.

The AAO has previously found extreme hardship to the applicant's spouse were he to relocate to Ghana. There is no indication that country conditions in Ghana or the applicant's spouse's personal circumstances have changed such that he would not experience extreme hardship upon relocation to Ghana.

In proceedings for application for waiver of grounds of inadmissibility under section 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. As the applicant has not established extreme hardship to a qualifying family member no purpose would be served in determining whether the applicant merits a waiver as a matter of discretion. Accordingly, the appeal will be dismissed.

ORDER: The motion is granted, and the underlying Form I-601 application remains dismissed.