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



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

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FILE:



Office: MEXICO CITY, MEXICO  
(CIUDAD JUAREZ)

Date: NOV 03 2010

IN RE:

Applicant:



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

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.

Thank you,

*Tavia Lyed*  
for

Perry Rhew  
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The waiver application was denied by the Acting District Director, Mexico City, Mexico. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be sustained.<sup>1</sup>

The applicant is a native and citizen of Mexico who was found to be inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(B)(i)(II), for having been unlawfully present in the United States for more than one year and seeking readmission within ten years of his last departure from the United States. The applicant is married to a United States citizen. He seeks a waiver of inadmissibility in order to reside in the United States with his spouse and children.

The Acting District Director found that, based on the evidence in the record, the applicant had failed to establish extreme hardship to his qualifying relative. The application was denied accordingly. *Decision of the Acting District Director*, dated April 15, 2008.

On appeal, the applicant's spouse states that her family would suffer should the waiver application be denied. *Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion*.

In support of these assertions, the record includes a brief and a statement submitted by an attorney. The record also includes, but is not limited to, statements from the applicant's spouse; medical records for the applicant's spouse and children; school records and statements for the children; bill statements; statements from family members and a friend; a statement from the applicant; financial documents; and an apartment lease. The entire record was reviewed and considered in rendering a decision on the appeal.

Section 212(a)(9)(B) of the Act provides, in pertinent part:

(B) Aliens Unlawfully Present.-

(i) In general. - Any alien (other than an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence) who-

....

(II) has been unlawfully present in the United States for one year or more, and who again seeks admission within 10 years of the date of such alien's departure or removal from the United States, is inadmissible.

....

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<sup>1</sup> The AAO notes that the record includes a brief and statements submitted by an attorney. As no Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative is included in the record, the AAO will not recognize this individual as the applicant's representative.

(iii) Exceptions.-

(I) Minors.-No period of time in which an alien is under 18 years of age shall be taken into account in determining the period of unlawful presence in the United States under clause (i).

(v) Waiver. – The Attorney General [now the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary)] has sole discretion to waive clause (i) in the case of an immigrant who is the spouse or 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 such immigrant alien would result in extreme hardship to the citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent of such alien.

In the present case, the record indicates that the applicant entered the United States without inspection in April 2001 and voluntarily departed in August 2007, returning to Mexico. *Consular Memorandum, American Consulate General, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico*, dated August 28, 2007. The applicant, therefore, accrued unlawful presence from November 5, 2003, the date he turned 18 years old until he departed the United States in August 2007. In applying for an immigrant visa, the applicant is seeking admission within ten years of his August 2007 departure from the United States. The applicant is, therefore, inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act for being unlawfully present in the United States for a period of more than one year.

Section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) of the Act provides for a waiver of section 212(a)(9)(B)(i) inadmissibility as follows:

The Attorney General [now Secretary of Homeland Security] has sole discretion to waive clause (i) in the case of an immigrant who is the spouse or son or daughter of a United States citizen or of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence, if it is established . . . that the refusal of admission to such immigrant alien would result in extreme hardship to the citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent of such alien.

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 or children can be considered only insofar as it results in hardship to a qualifying relative. The applicant's spouse is the only qualifying relative 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).

As a qualifying relative is not required to depart the United States as a consequence of an applicant's inadmissibility, two distinct factual scenarios exist should a waiver application be denied: either the qualifying relative will join the applicant to reside abroad or the qualifying relative will remain in the United States. Ascertaining the actual course of action that will be taken is complicated by the fact

that an applicant may easily assert a plan for the qualifying relative to relocate abroad or to remain in the United States depending on which scenario presents the greatest prospective hardship, even though no intention exists to carry out the alleged plan in reality. Cf. *Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. 880, 885 (BIA 1994) (addressing separation of minor child from both parents applying for suspension of deportation). Thus, we interpret the statutory language of the various waiver provisions in section 212 of the Act to require an applicant to establish extreme hardship to his or her qualifying relative(s) under both possible scenarios. To endure the hardship of separation when extreme hardship could be avoided by joining the applicant abroad, or to endure the hardship of relocation when extreme hardship could be avoided by remaining in the United States, is a matter of choice and not the result of removal or inadmissibility. As the Board of Immigration Appeals stated in *Matter of Ige*:

[W]e consider the critical issue . . . to be whether a child would suffer extreme hardship if he accompanied his parent abroad. If, as in this case, no hardship would ensue, then the fact that the child might face hardship if left in the United States would be the result of parental choice, not the parent's deportation.

*Id.* See also *Matter of Pilch*, 21 I&N Dec. 627, 632-33 (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 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. at 631-32; *Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. at 883; *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.*

We observe that 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., In re 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).

Family separation, for instance, has been found to be a common result of inadmissibility or removal in some cases. *See Matter of Shaughnessy*, 12 I&N Dec. at 813. Nevertheless, family ties are to be considered in analyzing hardship. *See Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, 22 I&N Dec. at 565-66. The question of whether family separation is the ordinary result of inadmissibility or removal may depend on the nature of family relationship considered. For example, in *Matter of Shaughnessy*, the Board considered the scenario of parents being separated from their soon-to-be adult son, finding that this separation would not result in extreme hardship to the parents. *Id.* at 811-12; *see also U.S. v. Arrieta*, 224 F.3d 1076, 1082 (9th Cir. 2000) (“[REDACTED] was not a spouse, but a son and brother. It was evident from the record that the effect of the deportation order would be separation rather than relocation.”). In *Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, the Board considered the scenario of the respondent’s spouse accompanying him to Mexico, finding that she would not experience extreme hardship from losing “physical proximity to her family” in the United States. 22 I&N Dec. at 566-67.

The decision in *Cervantes-Gonzalez* reflects the norm that spouses reside with one another and establish a life together such that separating from one another is likely to result in substantial hardship. It is common for both spouses to relocate abroad if one of them is not allowed to stay in the United States, which typically results in separation from other family members living in the United States. Other decisions reflect the expectation that minor children will remain with their parents, upon whom they usually depend for financial and emotional support. *See, e.g., Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. at 886 (“[I]t is generally preferable for children to be brought up by their parents.”). Therefore, the most important single hardship factor may be separation, particularly where spouses and minor children are concerned. *Salcido-Salcido*, 138 F.3d at 1293 (quoting *Contreras-Buenfil v. INS*, 712 F.2d 401, 403 (9th Cir. 1983)); *Cerrillo-Perez*, 809 F.2d at 1422.

Regardless of the type of family relationship involved, the hardship resulting from family separation is determined based on the actual impact of separation on an applicant, and all hardships must be considered in determining whether the combination of hardships takes the case beyond the consequences ordinarily associated with removal or inadmissibility. *Matter of O-J-O*, 21 I&N Dec. at 383. Nevertheless, though we require an applicant to show that a qualifying relative would experience extreme hardship both in the event of relocation and in the event of separation, in analyzing the latter scenario, we give considerable, if not predominant, weight to the hardship of

separation itself, particularly in cases involving the separation of spouses from one another and/or minor children from a parent. *Salcido-Salcido*, 138 F.3d at 1293.

If the applicant's spouse joins the applicant in Mexico, the applicant needs to establish that his spouse will suffer extreme hardship. The applicant's spouse was born in the United States. *Birth certificate*. All of the family of the applicant's spouse lives in the United States. *Attorney's brief*. The applicant's spouse does not speak Spanish well enough to communicate on a daily basis in Mexico. *Id.* The applicant's spouse has suffered from kidney stones, gallstones, and is obese. *Medical records for the applicant's spouse*. The applicant's spouse's son has had disciplinary problems in school. *School records for the child of the applicant's spouse*. He has a lot of difficulty paying attention and following directions. *Id.* He is currently being treated by a physician for Attention Deficit Disorder. *Statement from [REDACTED]*, dated April 29, 2008. The applicant's spouse notes that it is very hard for her to control her child. *Statement from the applicant's spouse*, dated May 2, 2008. While the child of the applicant's spouse is not a qualifying relative for the purposes of this case, the AAO acknowledges the documented behavioral problems of the child and its effect upon the applicant's spouse. The AAO recognizes that relocating to a foreign country would disrupt the child's life, subsequently affecting the applicant's spouse. The applicant's spouse's daughter has been diagnosed as having an upper respiratory infection with infection of both ears, respiratory syncytial virus bronchiolitis, and otitis media, constipation, and a urinary tract infection. *Medical records for the child of the applicant's spouse*. While the record does not include documentation, such as published country conditions reports, regarding the healthcare system in Mexico and whether adequate care is available, the AAO acknowledges the documented health conditions of the applicant's child and recognizes that a relocation to Mexico would disrupt the consistent care she has received in the United States. When looking at the aforementioned factors, particularly the applicant's spouse's lack of familial and cultural ties to Mexico, separation from her family in the United States, her lack of language abilities and its impact upon her adjustment to Mexico, her medical issues, the documented behavioral problems of her son and health conditions of her daughter and the effect of these conditions upon the applicant's spouse, the AAO finds that the applicant has demonstrated extreme hardship to his spouse if she were to reside in Mexico.

If the applicant's spouse resides in the United States, the applicant needs to establish that his spouse will suffer extreme hardship. As previously noted, the applicant's spouse was born in the United States. *Birth certificate*. All of the family of the applicant's spouse lives in the United States. *Attorney's brief*. The applicant's spouse has suffered from kidney stones, gallstones, and is obese. *Medical records for the applicant's spouse*. The applicant's spouse's son has had disciplinary problems in school. *School records for the child of the applicant's spouse*. He has a lot of difficulty paying attention and following directions. *Id.* He is currently being treated by a physician for Attention Deficit Disorder. *Statement from [REDACTED]*, dated April 29, 2008. The applicant's spouse notes that it is very hard for her to control her child. *Statement from the applicant's spouse*, dated May 2, 2008. The applicant's spouse's daughter has been diagnosed as having an upper respiratory infection with infection of both ears, respiratory syncytial virus bronchiolitis, and otitis media, constipation, and a urinary tract infection. *Medical records for the child of the applicant's spouse*. The AAO recognizes the difficulties in being a single parent with health issues having to care for two children with documented medical and behavioral conditions. The applicant's spouse states that she was laid off from her job and has lived off of unemployment

checks, foodstamps and whatever money was saved. *Statement from the applicant's spouse*, dated September 9, 2007. The AAO notes that the record fails to include documentation from the former employer of the applicant's spouse regarding her dismissal as well as proof of unemployment checks and foodstamps. Going on record without supporting documentary evidence will not meet the burden of proof of this proceeding. *See 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)). Nevertheless, the record includes documentation of the various expenses of the applicant's spouse as well as a bank statement showing a balance of \$100.00. *See car insurance statement; a credit card statement; an apartment lease; utility bills; a cable bill; a cell phone bill and a bank statement*. The AAO also notes that the applicant's spouse and her family are living with her mother, stepfather and stepsiblings in a small three bedroom house to save money. *Statement from the mother and stepfather of the applicant's spouse*, dated September 9, 2007; *Statement from the applicant's spouse*, dated September 9, 2007. When looking at the aforementioned factors, particularly the difficulties in being a single parent with health issues having to care for two children with documented medical and behavioral conditions, and the documented financial difficulties of the applicant's spouse, the AAO finds that the applicant has demonstrated extreme hardship to his spouse if she were to remain in the United States.

The AAO additionally finds that the applicant merits a waiver of inadmissibility as a matter of discretion. 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).

The adverse factors in the present case are the applicant's 2001 entry without inspection, his prior unlawful presence for which he now seeks a waiver, and his unauthorized employment while in the United States. The favorable and mitigating factors are his United States citizen spouse and children, the extreme hardship to his spouse if he were refused admission and his lack of a criminal record.

The AAO finds that, although the immigration violations committed by the applicant were serious and cannot be condoned, when taken together, the favorable factors in the present case outweigh the adverse factors, such that a favorable exercise of discretion is warranted.

In proceedings for application for waiver of grounds of inadmissibility under section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) of the Act, the burden of proving eligibility remains entirely with the applicant. *See* section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, the applicant has met that burden. Accordingly, the appeal will be sustained.

**ORDER:** The appeal is sustained.