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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: MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Date: OCT 04 2010

IN RE:

Applicant:



APPLICATIONS: Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility under 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:



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 law was inappropriately applied by us in reaching our decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. The specific requirements for filing such a request can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. All motions must be submitted to the office that originally decided your case by filing a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$585. Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires that any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,

Tang Syed
for

Perry Rhew

Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The waiver application was denied by the Field Office Director, Memphis, Tennessee, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The record reflects that the applicant is a native and citizen of Mexico who was found to be inadmissible to the United States pursuant to section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (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 the son of lawful permanent residents of the United States and the beneficiary of an approved Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130). The applicant seeks a waiver of inadmissibility pursuant to section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(9)(B)(v), in order to reside in the United States with his parents and siblings.

The Field Office Director found that the applicant had 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. *Decision of the Field Office Director*, dated April 15, 2008.

On appeal, the applicant, through counsel, claims that the applicant is eligible for a waiver based on extreme hardship to his lawful permanent resident parents. *Counsel's appeal brief*, dated May 9, 2008. Counsel contends that United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) "ignore[d] the extreme anxiety and severe depression being experienced by [the applicant's mother]." *Id.*

The record includes, but is not limited to, counsel's appeal brief; a statement from the applicant's mother; a psychological evaluation for the applicant's mother; wage and tax documents, insurance documents, and household bills; and information on the applicant's mother's medications. The entire record was reviewed and considered in arriving at 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.

....

(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).

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- (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 [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 reflects that the applicant entered the United States in either June 1999 and/or October 1999 without inspection. The applicant started accruing unlawful presence on 11/29/00, the date he turned eighteen (18) years old. The record reflects that the applicant was stopped at the border in 2002 and 2005. It is unclear when the applicant left the United States prior to those stops at the border, but as he has not contested his inadmissibility and has provided no evidence that he did not accrue one year or more of unlawful presence, the AAO finds him to be inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act.¹

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 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).

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

¹ The AAO notes that the applicant may also be inadmissible to the United States pursuant to section 212(a)(9)(C)(i)(I) of the Act for having been unlawfully present in the United States for an aggregate period of more than one year and reentering the United States without being admitted. The AAO notes that the record is unclear regarding when the applicant entered and exited the United States and the manner of his entries and attempted entries.

the United States, is a matter of choice and not the result of removal or inadmissibility. As the Board of Immigration Appeals (Board) 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) (“Mr. Arrieta 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.

The first prong of the analysis addresses hardship to the applicant’s parents if they relocate to Mexico. In counsel’s appeal brief dated May 9, 2008, counsel states “[i]t would not be feasible for [the applicant’s parents] to move to Mexico.” He claims that all of their children are in the United States, the applicant’s mother helps care for her grandchild, and they own some property in the United States. Counsel states “[t]hey would lose everything they worked for in the United States if they left for Mexico and would be forced to uproot their family.” Counsel also states the applicant’s mother has hypertension, high

cholesterol, and an undiagnosed liver condition, and these health problems are “bad enough to prevent her from working a normal job.”

Regarding the applicant’s mother’s medical conditions, the AAO notes that the record establishes that the applicant’s mother is taking several medications. However, the AAO notes that there is no evidence in the record that the applicant’s mother cannot receive treatment for her medical conditions in Mexico or has to remain in the United States to receive treatment. The record is not clear as to the severity of the applicant’s mother’s medical problems. The AAO notes that the record fails to contain documentary evidence, e.g., country conditions reports on Mexico, that establishes that the applicant’s parents would be unable to obtain employment upon relocation. Going on record without supporting documentation is not sufficient to meet the applicant’s burden of proof in 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)).

The AAO notes that the applicant’s parents are natives and citizens of Mexico, and it has not been established that they do not speak Spanish. In that the record does not include sufficient documentation of financial, medical, emotional or other types of hardship that the applicant’s parents would experience if they joined the applicant in Mexico, the AAO does not find the applicant to have established that his parents would suffer extreme hardship upon relocation.

In addition, the record does not establish extreme hardship to the applicant’s parents if they remain in the United States. In an affidavit dated March 24, 2008, the applicant’s mother states if the applicant’s “waiver is not granted, [her] life will be extremely difficult” and she will suffer “emotional harm” from his absence. Counsel states the applicant and his parents have a very close bond. The applicant’s mother states she is dependent on the applicant for comfort and support. She claims that she is anxious and depressed. In a psychological report dated April 7, 2008, [redacted] diagnosed the applicant’s mother with adjustment disorder with anxiety and depression. The report reflects that the applicant’s mother scored in the extreme range on the Burns Anxiety Inventory and in the severe range on the Burns Depression Checklist, and she reported headaches, low energy, fatigue, anxiety attacks and sleep disturbance. Counsel claims that the applicant’s mother “needs [the applicant] to help comfort her during her difficult time and to help provide income for her medical care.”

The applicant’s mother states she is an unemployed housewife and the applicant “has a much higher income potential in the United States than [she] do[es].” The AAO notes that the record establishes that the applicant claimed \$43,119 in 2007. Counsel states the applicant’s parents “rely on [the applicant] to keep the family financially secure,” because the applicant’s father “does not earn a sufficient income to support the family on his own.” The applicant’s mother states her husband earns about \$500.00 a week. The AAO notes that the record establishes that the applicant’s father claimed \$36,351 in 2006 and \$32,199 in 2005. Counsel states the applicant “helps his parents pay all of their bills,” including his mother’s medical bills. The applicant’s mother states if the applicant is removed from the United States, she would have to find work and that “would be complicated...because of [her] health problems.”

The AAO acknowledges that the applicant’s mother is suffering from various medical conditions; however, the severity of the applicant’s mother’s medical conditions are unclear. The AAO finds the record to include some documentation of the applicant’s parents’ income and expenses, including U.S. Individual

Income Tax Returns (Form 1040), a utility bill, medical bills, and rental receipts. Considering the financial, medical and emotional hardship factors, the AAO finds that the applicant's mother would suffer extreme hardship if she remains in the United States. The record does not reflect that the applicant's father would suffer extreme hardship if he remains in the United States.

A review of the documentation in the record fails to establish the existence of extreme hardship to the applicant's parents caused by the applicant's inadmissibility to the United States. Having found the applicant statutorily ineligible for relief, no purpose would be served in discussing whether he merits a waiver as a matter of discretion.

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 not met that burden. Accordingly, the appeal will be dismissed.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.