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

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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



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DATE: MAY 03 2012 Office: MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
(CIUDAD JUAREZ)

FILE: 

IN RE: Applicant: 

APPLICATION: 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.

Thank you,

Perry R. Hew

Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The waiver application was denied by the District Director, Mexico City, Mexico. A subsequent appeal was dismissed by the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The matter is now before the AAO on a motion to reconsider. The motion will be granted. The previous decisions of the district director and the AAO will be withdrawn and the application approved.

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 10 years of his last departure from the United States. The record indicates that the applicant is married to a U.S. citizen. 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 U.S. citizen spouse.

The district director found that the applicant failed to establish that extreme hardship would be imposed on the applicant's spouse and denied the Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility (Form I-601) accordingly. *Decision of the District Director*, dated April 17, 2007. The AAO found that the applicant had established extreme hardship to his spouse upon separation from the applicant, but not upon relocation to Mexico, and dismissed the appeal. *AAO Decision*, dated November 25, 2009.

On motion, the applicant states his wife is suffering from depression and she is having financial difficulties. *See Form I-290B*, filed May 21, 2007.

The record includes, but is not limited to, an appeal brief; letters from the applicant, his wife, family and friends; a psychological evaluation of the applicant's wife; letters of support; and copies of household bills. 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.

....

- (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 application, the record indicates that the applicant initially entered the United States in October 1994 without inspection. In April 2006, the applicant voluntarily departed the United States. The applicant accrued unlawful presence from April 1, 1997, the effective date of the unlawful presence provisions under the Act, until he departed the United States in April 2006. The applicant is seeking admission to the United States within ten years of his April 2006 departure from the United States. The applicant is, therefore, inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(9)(B)(II) of the Act for being unlawfully present in the United States for a period of more than one year.¹

A section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) waiver of the bar to admission resulting from section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act is dependent first upon a showing that the bar imposes an extreme hardship to the U.S. citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent of the applicant. Hardship to the applicant or her child is not considered in section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) waiver proceedings unless it causes hardship to a qualifying relative, in this case the applicant's spouse. Once extreme hardship is established, it is but one favorable factor to be considered in the determination of whether the Secretary should exercise discretion. See *Matter of Mendez*, 21 I&N Dec. 296 (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

¹ The AAO notes the August 19, 2009 Form I-212 denial in the record which finds the applicant to be inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(C) of the Act. However, a consular memo in the file and a check of relevant databases does not indicate that the applicant was ever removed from the United States or that he, thereafter, entered the United States without inspection.

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 in our November 25, 2009 decision, we found that the applicant had demonstrated extreme hardship to his spouse if she remained in the United States without him. Therefore, we will only consider hardship to the applicant’s spouse should she relocate to Mexico.

The applicant’s spouse states that the applicant is living in Guadalajara and that Guadalajara is a dangerous place; the applicant is stopped by police for money; she cannot imagine living like that; the workplace in Mexico is slow and the applicant has not been able to find permanent employment; she would be unable to get a job as she is not fluent in Spanish and is not authorized to work in Mexico; she would be in danger as a U.S. citizen; the thought of leaving her family, friends, home and job behind is almost as depressing as being away from the applicant; she has no family ties in Mexico as her family is from Guatemala; and as the applicant resides with his grandmother, she would be living with strangers and they would not have a place of their own.

The AAO notes that the record reflects that the applicant is residing in Guadalajara, where he was born and that it is likely that his spouse would also live at that location. We also observe that the Department of State has issued a Travel Warning for Mexico, last updated on February 8, 2012, which details general safety issues and also states:

Jalisco Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta are the major cities/travel destinations in Jalisco - see map (PDF, 286 kb) to identify their exact locations: You should defer non-essential travel to areas of the state that border the states of Michoacán and Zacatecas. You should also exercise caution when traveling at night outside of cities in the remaining portions of this state. The security situation along the Michoacán and Zacatecas borders continues to be unstable and gun battles between criminal groups and authorities occur. Concerns include roadblocks placed by individuals posing as police or military personnel and recent gun battles between rival TCOs involving automatic weapons.

The record reflects that the applicant's spouse was born and raised in the United States, has family ties in the United States and does not have family ties in Mexico. In addition, she does not speak Spanish and she has legitimate concerns for her safety in Guadalajara. Based on these factors and the normal hardships created by relocation, the AAO finds that extreme hardship has been established in the event that the applicant's spouse relocates to Mexico.

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).

In evaluating whether section 212(h)(1)(B) 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-Morales, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996). The AAO must then, "[B]alance 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 adverse factors in the present case include the applicant's unauthorized period of stay, entry without inspection and unauthorized employment.

The favorable factors for the applicant include his U.S. citizen spouse, the absence of a criminal record, the extreme hardship to his spouse if the waiver application is denied and his good moral character, as evidenced in the many letters of support.

The AAO finds that the immigration violations committed by the applicant are serious in nature and cannot be condoned. Nevertheless, the AAO finds that taken together, the favorable factors in the present case outweigh the adverse factors, such that a favorable exercise of discretion is warranted. Accordingly, the previous decisions of the district director and the AAO will be withdrawn and the application will be approved.

ORDER: The previous decisions of the district director and the AAO are withdrawn and the application is approved.