

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



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services



#6

Date: NOV 01 2012

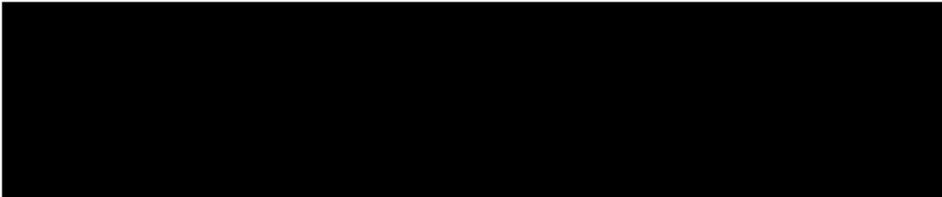
Office: MANILA, PHILIPPINES

FILE: 

IN RE: 

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

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Perry Rhew".

Perry Rhew  
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The waiver application was denied by the Field Office Director, Manila, Philippines. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be sustained and the waiver application will be approved.

The applicant is a native and citizen of the Philippines 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 again seeking admission within ten years of her last departure from the United States. 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 a bar to her admission to the United States would result in extreme hardship to the qualifying relative and denied the application accordingly. *See Decision of the Field Office Director*, dated December 15, 2010.

On appeal, the applicant's attorney asserts that sufficient evidence was submitted to prove that the qualifying spouse would suffer extreme hardship as a result of her being denied entry into the United States. Nonetheless, the applicant's attorney provided additional evidence on appeal to support the applicant's waiver application.

The record contains the Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility (Form I-601); a Notice of Appeal or Motion (Form I-290B); briefs and letters from the applicant's attorney; statements and affidavits from the applicant and qualifying spouse; documents establishing identity, relationships, and citizenship for the qualifying spouse and applicant; copies of pages from the qualifying spouse's mother's U.S. passport and a power of attorney document regarding her guardianship; medical background information regarding Alzheimer's disease and fertility after age thirty-five; medical documentation regarding the qualifying spouse, his mother and the applicant; a death certificate for the qualifying spouse's father; country-conditions materials; a letter from the qualifying spouse's employer; financial documentation, including tax returns and proof of remittances from the applicant's qualifying spouse; and the applicant's two approved Petitions for Alien Fiancé with two prior petitioners. The entire record was reviewed and considered in rendering a decision on the appeal.

Section 212(a)(9) 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.

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. The applicant's husband 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).

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 record indicates that the applicant entered the United States with a K-1 visa on April 17, 2002 and was authorized to remain until July 16, 2002. The applicant married the petitioner of her K-1 visa, yet failed to file for an adjustment of status after her marriage. She departed the United States on September 24, 2008. The applicant accrued unlawful presence for a period in excess of one year from July 16, 2002 until September 24, 2008. The applicant is seeking admission within ten years of her departure from the United States. Therefore, as a result of the applicant’s unlawful presence, she is inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act. The applicant has not disputed her inadmissibility.

The AAO finds that the applicant has established that her qualifying spouse is suffering extreme hardship as a consequence of being separated from her. With respect to the emotional and psychological hardships of the qualifying spouse, the record contains letters from the qualifying spouse’s psychiatrist, proof of his antidepressant medication prescriptions and an affidavit from the qualifying spouse. The record demonstrates that the qualifying spouse has been suffering from depression, sleeplessness, anxiety, problems dealing with daily activities and other emotional issues. His psychological hardship is augmented by the fact that he takes care of his mother, who has dementia, by himself. The applicant’s spouse also indicates in his affidavit that the suffering caused by his separation from the applicant “eats away at [his] spirit and incites [him] to so much anger that [he] oftentimes, [doesn’t] even know that to do with [himself].” He also states that he is

“physically withering away and feeling lost and forsaken.” He is also concerned about his and the applicant’s ability to have children, as they are both in their forties. With regard to the applicant’s spouse’s financial hardships, it appears that, given his income and financial situation, he struggles to send money to the applicant. The qualifying spouse indicates that, if the applicant were able to live in the United States, she either could help him take care of his mother so that he could work additional hours or she could work and contribute financially. The record contains financial documentation establishing that the applicant worked in the United States and could contribute financially. As such, the applicant has sufficiently shown that the cumulative hardships faced by the qualifying spouse due to his separation from her are extreme.

The applicant has also demonstrated that her qualifying spouse would suffer extreme hardship in the event that he relocated to the Philippines to be with the applicant. The qualifying spouse has lived in the United States his entire life, and all of his family, including his mother and siblings, live in the United States. He has no ties to the Philippines other than the applicant, and he does not speak the language. In addition, the qualifying spouse’s mother suffers from Alzheimer’s disease, and he is her primary caregiver. As a result, were the applicant’s spouse to relocate to the Philippines, he would have to take his mother with him. He worries that his mother being in unfamiliar surroundings could complicate her condition. Further, the qualifying spouse is unable to work full-time, as his mother requires full-time care. However, in the United States, he has secured a flexible part-time position where he is able to bring his mother to work with him. The record also indicates that the qualifying spouse is listed as his mother’s dependent, and he relies on her survivor benefits to live and provide care to her. The applicant’s spouse indicates that he has considered moving to the Philippines but, aside from the issues with his mother, he feels that he would be unable to find work because of his inability to speak the language and his lack of an education. The record contains country-conditions materials documenting the high unemployment in the Philippines. As such, the cumulative effect of the hardships to the qualifying spouse were he to relocate, in light of his length of residence in the United States, his family ties to the United States, his mother’s medical conditions and reliance on his care, his financial ties to the United States and country conditions in the Philippines, rises to the level of extreme.

Considered in the aggregate, the applicant has established that her qualifying spouse would face extreme hardship if the applicant’s waiver request is denied. Extreme hardship is a requirement for eligibility, but once established it is but one favorable discretionary factor to be considered. *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996). For waivers of inadmissibility, the burden is on the applicant to establish that a grant of a waiver of inadmissibility is warranted in the exercise of discretion. *Id.* at 299. The adverse factors evidencing an alien’s undesirability as a permanent resident must be balanced with the social and humane considerations presented on her behalf to determine whether the grant of relief in the exercise of discretion appears to be in the best interests of this country. *Id.* at 300.

In *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, in evaluating whether section 212(h)(1)(B) relief is warranted in the exercise of discretion, the Board stated that:

The factors adverse to the applicant 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, recency and seriousness, and the presence of other evidence indicative of an 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 the alien began his 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 and service to 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).

*Id.* at 301.

The Board further states that upon review of the record as a whole, a balancing of the equities and adverse matters must be made to determine whether discretion should be favorably exercised. The equities that the applicant must bring forward to establish that she merits a favorable exercise of administrative discretion will depend in each case on the nature and circumstances of the ground of exclusion sought to be waived and on the presence of any additional adverse matters, and as the negative factors grow more serious, it becomes incumbent upon the applicant to introduce additional offsetting favorable evidence. *Id.* at 301.

The favorable factors in this matter are the extreme hardships the applicant's U.S. citizen spouse would face if the applicant is not granted this waiver, whether he accompanied the applicant or remained in the United States, and her lack of a criminal record. The unfavorable factors in this matter are the applicant's accrual of unlawful presence in the United States.

Although the applicant's violation of the immigration law cannot be condoned, the positive factors in this case outweigh the negative factors. In these proceedings, the burden of establishing eligibility for the waiver rests entirely with the applicant. *See* section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. In this case, the applicant has met her burden and the appeal will be sustained.

**ORDER:** The appeal is sustained.