



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

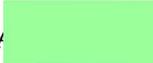
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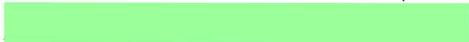
DATE: JAN 10 2013

OFFICE: SANTO DOMINGO

FILE: A



IN RE:



APPLICATION: Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility pursuant to 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:

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.

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 with the field office or service center that originally decided your case by filing a 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,

Ron Rosenberg, Acting Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Field Office Director, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, denied the Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility (Form I-601). A subsequent appeal was dismissed by the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The matter is now before the AAO on motion. The motion will be granted and the underlying application remains denied.

The applicant, a native and citizen of the Dominican Republic, was found to be inadmissible to the United States pursuant to 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 one year or more and seeking readmission within 10 years of departure from the United States. The applicant seeks a waiver of inadmissibility (Form I-601) under 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.

On August 17, 2009, the Field Office Director determined that the applicant failed to establish extreme hardship to his spouse and denied the Form I-601 application for a waiver accordingly. The applicant appealed that decision to the AAO, and the appeal was dismissed.¹

On motion, the applicant submits new evidence and states that his spouse will suffer extreme hardship as a result of his inadmissibility.

In support of the waiver application, the record includes, but is not limited to, letters from the applicant's spouse, a psychological evaluation pertaining to the applicant's spouse, a list of medications taken by the applicant's spouse, a letter from the applicant's spouse's physician, documentation of the applicant's spouse's travel to the Dominican Republic, a letter from a friend of the applicant's spouse, photographs of the applicant and his spouse, and documentation of the applicant's immigration history.

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). A motion that does not meet applicable requirements shall be dismissed. 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(4).

The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. *See Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004). The entire record was reviewed and considered in rendering a decision on the motion.

The applicant is inadmissible under section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act for having been unlawfully present in the United States for one year or more. Section 212(a)(9) of the Act provides, in pertinent part, that:

(B) ALIENS UNLAWFULLY PRESENT.-

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

¹ The AAO notes that the Field Office Director denied the applicant's previous I-601 application on June 16, 2008 and that appeal was dismissed by the AAO on July 16, 2009.

...
(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 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 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. No court shall have jurisdiction to review a decision or action by the Attorney General regarding a waiver under this clause.

The applicant stated that he entered the United States, specifically Puerto Rico by boat, without inspection on or about May 8, 2004, accruing unlawful presence in the United States from that day until he departed the United States on April 13, 2008. As the period of unlawful presence accrued is one year or more, the applicant is inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(II) of the Act for a period of 10 years from his departure from the United States. The applicant does not contest this finding of inadmissibility on appeal.

The applicant is eligible to apply for a waiver of this ground of inadmissibility under section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) of the Act, as the spouse of a U.S. citizen. In order to qualify for this waiver, however, he must first prove that the refusal of his admission to the United States would result in extreme hardship to his 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*, 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. 627, 632-33 (BIA 1996); *Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. 880, 885 (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 1292, 1293 (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 AAO previously determined that the applicant did not establish that his spouse would suffer extreme hardship either due to separation or relocation. On motion, the applicant's spouse states that she is suffering from extreme emotional hardship as a result of separation from the applicant and that she would also suffer extreme emotional hardship if she were to relocate to the Dominican Republic. The applicant's spouse submitted a psychiatric report completed on February 10, 2012 by Dr. [REDACTED] states that the applicant's spouse's concentration has deteriorated and has affected her every day activities. He also states that "her tolerance to stress was minimum and her sensorial and intellectual function was severely impaired." Dr. [REDACTED] prescribed the applicant's spouse psychotherapy as well as Prozac,

Risperdal, Ambien, and Klonopin. Although the AAO respects the opinion of Dr. [REDACTED], no documentary evidence, was provided to support the assertion that the applicant's spouse's every day activities, including her volunteer work as a school teacher, was affected by her emotional hardship. Moreover, the applicant's spouse states that she cares for her elderly parents and a disabled brother. Not only does she not provide any documentation to support the assertion that she cares for those individuals, there is no indication how her emotional hardship has affected those responsibilities. The AAO notes that little weight can be afforded to the applicant's spouse's assertions in the absence of supporting evidence. See *Matter of Kwan*, 14 I&N Dec. 175 (BIA 1972) ("Information in an affidavit should not be disregarded simply because it appears to be hearsay; in administrative proceedings, that fact merely affects the weight to be afforded it."). 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)). Previously the applicant's spouse stated that she required her husband's assistance to help her with her medical conditions, which, according to medical records from 2009, includes hypertension. No recent evidence was submitted on motion, however, to document the applicant's spouse's current physical condition. Significant conditions of health, particularly when tied to an unavailability of suitable medical care in the country to which the qualifying relative would relocate, are relevant factors in establishing extreme hardship. Absent an explanation from the treating physician of the exact nature and severity of any condition and a description of any treatment or family assistance needed, the AAO is not in the position to reach conclusions concerning the severity of a medical condition or the treatment needed. Moreover, no new evidence of other types of hardship, such as financial hardship, was submitted on motion. Although, the AAO recognizes the impact of separation on families, the evidence in the record, when considered in the aggregate, does not indicate that the hardship in this case is extreme. *Matter of O-J-O-*, 21 I&N Dec. at 383.

On motion, the applicant's spouse states that she is not able to relocate to the Dominican Republic to reside with the applicant as she is responsible for caring for her elderly parents, as well as, on occasion, for a disabled brother. She also states that she has worked as a voluntary school teacher for 30 years and has strong ties to the school and the church. On motion, the applicant's spouse did not submit any documentation of the role that she plays in caring for her parents or her brother. Nor has she established what hardship her inability to care for those individuals would cause her if she were to relocate to the Dominican Republic. Additionally, there is no evidence in the record what hardship the applicant's spouse would suffer if she were no longer able to work in her role as a voluntary school teacher. The AAO also notes that there is no indication in the record that the applicant's spouse could not obtain treatment for her hypertension in the Dominican Republic. Again, 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)). No new evidence of other types of hardship was submitted on motion. Based on the evidence of record, considered in the aggregate, the evidence does not illustrate that the hardship suffered in this case, should the applicant's spouse relocate to the Dominican Republic, would be

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beyond what is normally experienced by families dealing with removal or inadmissibility. *Matter of O-J-O-*, 21 I&N Dec. at 383.

Although the applicant's spouse's concern over the applicant's immigration status is neither doubted nor minimized, the fact remains that Congress provided for a waiver of inadmissibility only under limited circumstances. In nearly every qualifying relationship, whether between husband and wife or parent and child, there is a deep level of affection and a certain amount of emotional and social interdependence. While, in common parlance, the prospect of separation or involuntary relocation nearly always results in considerable hardship to individuals and families, in specifically limiting the availability of a waiver of inadmissibility to cases of "extreme hardship," Congress did not intend that a waiver be granted in every case where a qualifying relationship, and thus the familial and emotional bonds, exist. The point made in this and prior decisions on this matter is that the current state of the law, viewed from a legislative, administrative, or judicial point of view, requires that the hardship, which meets the standard in section 212(a)(9)(B)(v) of the Act, be above and beyond the normal, expected hardship involved in such cases. As the applicant has not demonstrated extreme hardship from separation, we cannot find that refusal of admission would result in extreme hardship to the qualifying relative in this case.

The motion was granted and the evidence has been considered in the aggregate; however, there is no basis to disturb the previous decision in this case. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361, provides that the burden of proof is upon the applicant. After a careful review of the record, the AAO finds that in the present motion, the applicant has not met this burden. Accordingly, the motion is granted and the underlying appeal is dismissed.

ORDER: The motion is granted and the waiver application remains denied.