



ATTY. JOEL R. BANDER

# How do I bring my family to the US?

US non-immigrants (such as students, specialty workers, intracompany transferees, trainees, etc.) can also bring their loved ones to the United States. There are no numerical limits or processing delays related with dependent visas. Medical examination is also not required.

Immediate relatives of US citizens (parents, spouses and unmarried minor children) are not subject to numerical limitation but it may take 8-12 months before the relative can obtain his/her immigrant visa. The process may take longer if required additional documents are not submitted promptly. Some Consular Officers may require DNA testing if birth records presented are insufficient.

As part of the regular process, the relatives of US citizens and Legal Permanent Residents will be required to take medical examination prior to their interview. Certain health issues and presence of illegal drugs found in the system of the applicant may cause further delay or denial of the application. Criminal conviction is also another cause for denial and possible lifetime bar.

Petitioning a relative seems easy but lack of knowledge about the process could turn money, effort

and time spent on the case into tremendous frustration. That is why it is very important to consult with lawyers or people who have the knowledge, experience and qualification to ensure success of your application.

Bander Law Firm, LLP has been providing immigration services for over 15 years and has multilingual staff who can communicate effectively in Tagalog, Spanish, Sinhala, and Mandarin. Our firm provides free initial consultation on immigration matters, except criminal-related matters. Please feel free to call Bander Law Firm, LLP at 213-873-4333 to schedule your free initial consultation. To learn more about immigration concerns and read previous columns, visit [www.BanderLaw.com](http://www.BanderLaw.com).

\*\*\*  
Atty. Joel R. Bander is the partner of Bander Law Firm, LLP. With over 15 years of litigation and immigration experience, Mr. Bander is a leading litigator and accomplished trial strategist. He has successfully handled numerous cases before Federal, State, Civil, and Criminal Judges and has participated in hundreds of arbitrations and trials.

Bander Law Firm, LLP Downtown office address: 1055 W. 7th Street, Suite 1950, Los Angeles, CA, 90017. Tel: (213) 873-4333 Fax: (213) 873-4334. San Gabriel Office address: 1045 E. Valley Blvd., #A215, San Gabriel, CA 91776. Email: [info@banderlaw.com](mailto:info@banderlaw.com).

(Advertising Supplement)

## BARRISTER'S CORNER



ATTY. KENNETH URSUA REYES

# Awarding child custody in California

decisions such as where the child shall attend school, whether the child can travel to another jurisdiction or state, legal decisions involving the child. In cases where joint legal custody is ordered by the court, either parent alone can make decisions concerning the health, education, and welfare of the child unless otherwise specified in the order.

In making its determination on child custody issues, the court considers various factors depending on the specific facts of the case. The court usually follows the public policy of ensuring and encouraging the child's frequent and continuing contact with both parents after the divorce unless it would not be in the best interest of the child. Fam. Code §3011. If the court is inclined to order sole custody to one parent, the consideration boils down to which parent is more likely to allow the child frequent and continuing contact with the noncustodial parent. Family Code §3040(a)(1). A major factor that would tilt the courts decision are incidents or history of child abuse and domestic violence. This can be from the part of a parent, a parent's co-habitant, or other person to whom a parent has a relationship with. The child's amount and nature of contact with the parents is also another factor considered. Fam. Code §3011(c). Other factors

that can be considered are the parent's use of controlled substance, prior criminal convictions and registration as a sex offender, and existence of restraining order against a parent.

The family code requires that the parties go to mediation and attempt to agree on the custody issue prior to the court hearing the contested case. Family Code §3170(a). If the case is not settled in mediation, it gets decided in court through a contested hearing. At times, the court will order a child custody evaluation if it determines that it would be in the best interest of the child. The court may also appoint a minor's counsel if it feels it would be in the best interest of the child. Family Code §3150(a). The court retains continuous jurisdiction over issues of child custody and support until the child reaches 18. This means the order may be modified all throughout this period if there has been a change in circumstances.

\*\*\*  
Atty. Kenneth Ursua Reyes was President of the Philippine American Bar Association. He is a member of both the Family law section and Immigration law section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. He has extensive CPA experience prior to law practice. LAW OFFICES OF KENNETH REYES, P.C. is located at 3699 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA, 90010. Tel. (213) 388-1611 or e-mail [kureyeslaw@aol.com](mailto:kureyeslaw@aol.com). Visit website [Kenreyeslaw.com](http://Kenreyeslaw.com).

(Advertising Supplement)

# RE-UNION

Filipino-American Associations in America

Searching for a kababata from your hometown, a college buddy or a Pinoy colleague? Your search is finally over. The Asian Journal brings you Re:Union, Filipino American Associations in America -- your link to a network of kababayan associations here in the United States. As your Filipino-American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes your need to nourish and maintain ties with the people and the culture you were born with. This is our way of connecting our kababayans to the past, of creating new opportunities for the present and of inspiring you to pay it forward by becoming active members of your association and the FilAm community at large in the future.

## Federation of Filipino American Associations, Inc. (FFAAI)

Contact:  
2125 Santa Fe Ave., Long Beach, CA  
Phone No.: 562-570-4489  
Fax No.: 562-495-7502  
E-mail: [fedfilamassn@aol.com](mailto:fedfilamassn@aol.com)

THE Federation of Filipino American Associations, Inc. (FFAAD) is a Nonprofit 501 (c)(3) community-based organization. Strategically located at 2125 Santa Fe Avenue, Long Beach, California, we are implement and extend social services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate among residents of the Los Angeles County.

### Programs

ICM - Integrated Care Management  
Integrated Care Management is one of the main Services the Federation of Filipino - American Associations Inc., is extending to the Elderly / Seniors. In collaboration with the County of Los Angeles "AREA AGENCY ON AGING", through our Lead Agency, Special Services for Groups (SSG).

### Tobacco Education Program

This program has just been done, wherein our agency did a lot of one on one tobacco education program, as well as several Park surveys and market or vendors Tobacco information drive. Our Agency collaborated with the Department of Health & Services of the City of Long Beach.

### Family Preservation

Project designed to strengthen and preserve families who children are at risk for placement to foster care Lead Agency is the CAA.

### Health Access to Pacific Asian Seniors

HAPAS is a long time running project of the FFAA dealing with different program that is directly concern with the health is-

suess and program implementation to maintain a healthy seniors community. After the program concerning Diabetes, the most current program of HAPAS is the immunization concern for seniors, wherein a linguistically appropriate information materials are being distributed among seniors and their families in order to inform and encourage seniors to get the appropriate immunization, and community education on immunization are now being implemented. (Lead agency is UCLA & SSG)

### Board of Directors

Leo P. Pandac, Ph.D., President  
Rodolfo F. Reyes, Vice-President  
Paul C. Blanco, Secretary  
Lauraine Barber, Trasurer

### Members

Frank Aguilung, Chair - Housing  
Henry Bitanga, Vice - Chairman Housing  
Clare T. Alejandrino, Chair - Supportive Services

Jose P. Baldonado, M.D., Chair - Fund Development

Sally A. Ho, Chair - Volunteer Services  
Errol Parker, Chair - Public Relations  
Lysa Gamboa - Levy, Chair - Program Committee

Wilma J. Ryder, Chair - Operation Committee

### Staff

Paul C. Blanco, Executive Director  
Bernie Tabaosares, Administrative Officer. ■

## PAGE B2

Commission on Civil Rights. In 1973, Thelma was elected the first woman president of the Filipino Community of Anchorage, serving two consecutive terms. After her work on the McGovern campaign, in 1974 Thelma was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives as an Ad Hoc Democrat. She was subsequently re-elected to the Alaskan legislature in 1976, 1978, and 1980. Thelma was the first female Filipino American legislator in the United States of America and the first Filipino American elected to a United States legislative body by a constituency which was less than 3% Asian American and less than 1% Filipino American. Thelma Bucholdt served on the House Finance Committee, later becoming vice-chair of the committee. She championed funding

## Thelma Garcia...

for the Spenard Community Recreation Center, the Dempsey-Anderson Ice Arena, the Asian-Alaskan Cultural Center in Spenard, the renovation of the Filipino Community Hall in Juneau and many local roads, trails and parks. Thelma also sponsored and won funding for an underwater survey of Alaska's bowhead whale population. She also won funding for the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

In 1980, Thelma was elected the first Asian-American president of the National Order of Women Legislators, and in 1994, she was appointed director of Alaska's Office of Equal Opportunity.

Thelma became an expert on the history of Filipinos in Alaska. She produced a 30-minute documentary film on the subject and wrote a 200-page book, "Filipinos

in Alaska 1788-1958." Thelma was a three-term national president of the Filipino-American National Historical Society.

When their four children Titania, Chris, Hans, and Dylan were grown, Thelma and Jon enrolled in the District of Columbia School of Law, graduating in 1991. Both became members of the Alaska Bar Association.

When Thelma died of pancreatic cancer on November 5, 2007, she was the National President of the Filipino American National Historical Society, and had written and lectured widely about Alaska's Filipino communities. The history of the Filipino diaspora to America was important to Thelma. She wrote about history. But more significantly, Thelma Garcia Buchholdt made history.

To honor this great Filipino American, November 10, 2007 was proclaimed Thelma Buchholdt Day by Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. ■

## What every non-citizen should know...

### PAGE B1

migrant returning resident (SB-1) visa, which is issued at US consular offices abroad.

Issuance of the returning resident visa is contingent on showing that the resident maintains the intent to reside in the US, and that the cause of the protracted stay out of the US was beyond the control of the resident. The resident must also show that she is eligible for the immigrant visa in all other respects.

Consular officers are reluctant to issue the returning resident visas, as residents

have numerous chances to apply for travel documentation prior to departing the US. If a returning resident visa is refused on the grounds that a resident has given up her residence in the United States, she may have to apply for an immigrant visa on the same basis by which she immigrated originally, if circumstances permit.

While travel document options may be available for residents and for applicants whose residency application is pending, one should always avail of the service of experi-

enced counsel prior to departing the United States.

\*\*\*  
Atty. Reeves has represented clients in numerous landmark immigration cases that have set new policies regarding INS action and immigrants' rights. His offices are located in Pasadena, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Makati City.  
Telephone: (800) 795-8009  
E-mail: [immigration@reeves.com](mailto:immigration@reeves.com)  
Website: [www.reeves.com](http://www.reeves.com).

\*\*\*

The analysis and suggestions offered in this column do not create a lawyer-client relationship and are not a substitute for the personalized representation that is essential to every case.

(Advertising Supplement)

Insurance Companies and Employers have their own attorneys to protect them.

# WHO WILL PROTECT YOU?

Benefits under your insurance policies - Homeowners, Auto, Life, Disability, Annuity or Health. Claims for Serious Personal Injuries and Wrongful Death.

You need an attorney on your side.

Employee's claims for overtime and meal break compensation, employee's rights against disability discrimination and retaliation. Consumers damaged by unlawful business practices.

You need an attorney to fight for you.



With more than 21 years of skilled advocacy and experienced representation, the firm has obtained significant million dollar recoveries for injured consumers, policyholders and employees.

Backed by a solid track record, the law firm has consistently fought for the rights of Filipinos and their families seeking justice against big businesses, insurance companies and employers.

Law Offices of  
**C. JOE SAYAS, JR.**

Tel. No. 818.291.0088

[www.joesayaslaw.com](http://www.joesayaslaw.com)

700 N. Central Avenue, Suite 235  
Glendale, CA 91203

Our attorneys' accomplishments have been recognized by The Los Angeles Daily Journal, Million Dollar Advocates Forum, and various community organizations.

Your inquiries are welcome and at no cost to you.