

Sen. Feinstein blocks Filipina's deportation

PACIFICA—A Philippine-born lesbian mother who was ordered to leave the country by next month for overstaying her visa will likely be allowed to stay through next year due to Sen. Dianne Feinstein's intervention in the case.

Feinstein introduced an emergency immigration bill late Wednesday, April 22, on behalf of Shirley Tan who lives in Pacifica with her 12-year-old twin sons and partner of 19 years. A Feinstein spokeswoman says the 43-year-old Tan can't be deported until Congress acts on the legislation, which it is unlikely to do before its session expires in January 2011.

Gay rights advocates lobbied Feinstein to take up Tan's cause, noting that if her partner, Jay Mercado, were a man, the couple would be able to marry and Mercado—as a naturalized citizen—could sponsor Tan for residency. (AP)

APALC applauds Senator Feinstein's assistance on behalf of an Asian American same-sex couple

LOS ANGELES—On Wednesday, April 22, 2009, facing threat of deportation, Shirley Constantino Tan, a native of the Philippines, received relief when Senator Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Jackie Speier introduced a private bill (S. 867) to allow Tan to stay in the US with her US citizen partner, Jay Mercado, and their twin sons.

"Shirley Tan's case is a testament to the discrimination that exists within the immigration system," said Sara Sadhwani, immigrant rights project director at APALC.

Because same-sex marriage is not recognized by the federal government, same-sex binational couples are unable to sponsor spouses within the immigration system. "This case highlights the need for Congress to pass the Uniting American Families Act, which would expand the definition of families to include same-sex partners."

"Family unity is an essential value to the Asian American community as well as for the immigration system," said Karin Wang, Vice President of Programs at APALC. "It would be tragic for Shirley Tan to be separated from her

partner of 23 years or from their 12-year old twin sons, simply because of her sexual orientation."

APALC is urging Senator Feinstein and the entire California Congressional Delegation to support the Uniting American Families Act, which would allow US Citizens and legal permanent residents to sponsor their same-sex partners for immigration. Concerned community members should contact Senator Feinstein's office ((310) 914-7300) and ask her to support this legislation. ■

LA settles May Day clash lawsuits

PAGE A1 ◀

"We never heard a warning. Suddenly the police were firing tear gas and rubber-bullets into the crowd. One of the Filipina caregivers, Normita, was going to speak on the stage to advocate for genuine legalization for all immigrants, when we had to start running. We had to duck into a doorway because we were completely out of breath. It was terrible," stated Strela Cervas, active volunteer of Pilipino Workers Center.

Aquilina Soriano-Versoza, ex-

ecutive director of the Pilipino Workers Center, said that the settlement won is a victory for the community. PWC recognizes that what happened on May 1st 2007 was not a "melee," but in fact wrongful actions committed by the police against a peaceful demonstration. "No amount of money can erase the trauma experienced by the demonstrators, but the settlement sends a strong message that the community does have a right to voice its opinions and messages

without threat of violence," said Versoza.

At the press conference held last April 21, 2009, representatives from the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC), Association of Filipino Workers (AFW), Multi-ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON), Justice for Filipino American Veterans (JFAV), Echo Park Community Coalition (EPC), Alliance Philippines (AJLPP), Gabinet of the Mariposa Alliance, Kabataan Makabayan

(KMB) and Filipino Americans for Immigration Reform gathered to announce that money is available for those who participated in the May 1st 2007 demonstration. Anyone who needs instructions for filing a claim should contact 1.800.430.8895 or the Pilipino Workers Center at (213) 250-4353.

They also announced the actions that would be taken this year on May 1st. This year, the march is calling for Humane Immigration Reform, including an end to the raids, the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act and an economy that works for all. The Filipino contingent

will gather at the Pilipino Workers Center at 12:30pm at 153 Glendale Blvd., 2nd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90026. The main march will begin at 1:30 pm in Echo Park at the corner of Echo Park and Park Ave. The marchers will march down Sunset, past the detention center and the Federal Building to end on Main street at La Placita. They will then launch a collective action where they will assemble a 2,000 person postcard that will give an aerial message to the public and to President Obama. All are invited to join or to witness this historic event. (Cynthia de Castro)

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