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ATTY. JOEL R. BANDER

**T**HE US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on May 18, 2009 that it will continue to accept H-1B petitions for the fiscal year 2010. USCIS has only received approximately 45,500 petitions counting toward the general 65,000 cap and approximately 20,000 petitions for the 20,000 cap for aliens with advanced degrees.

This turnout contrasts with our experience in 2007 and 2008, when USCIS was immediately swamped with more petitions than visa numbers available on

# H-1B visas still available

the first two days of the filing season beginning April 1. During those years, USCIS conducted lottery and rejected thousands of applications that were not fortunate enough to be selected in the lottery. While many still expect USCIS to reach its ceiling this year, the question is whether USCIS will still conduct lottery once the ceiling has been reached.

Last year, USCIS issued a regulation allowing a minimum window of five business days for USCIS to receive H-1B cap-subject cases and thereafter, run a random lottery selection to determine which cases filed within this window will be eligible for a cap number. This is due to the excessive number of petitions received. However, for this year, the general cap has not been met during the five-day window, giving rise to the speculation that no

general lottery will be conducted. Some predict a "mini lottery" for cases filed after the five-day window if the number of additional filings exceeds the remainder of the cap. Until USCIS makes an announcement, it is not certain how the selection will be made.

One thing is certain, though. Those who failed to beat the April 1 rush can still file their petition and hope to be selected for processing. They still have time, but must act NOW.

Contact Bander Law Firm now to know if H-1B is an appropriate visa petition for you. H-1B is a temporary work visa for individuals with a bachelor's or higher degree to be employed in a professional occupation. The petition must be filed by a US employer on behalf of a foreign beneficiary. If the beneficiary is presently in the United States as

a nonimmigrant, he must be in valid status to apply for a change of status. The petition may also be filed for a beneficiary outside the United States, in which case, the visa will be applied for and issued in the US consulate in the beneficiary's home country.

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Bander Law Firm, LLP has been providing immigration services for over 15 years and has multilingual staff. Feel free to call Bander Law Firm, LLP at 213-873-4333 to schedule your consultation regarding your legal concerns. Bander Law Firm provides a full range of legal services in the fields of Immigration, Mortgage Litigation, Personal Injury, Bankruptcy, Criminal and Removal Defense, Civil and Business Litigation, Wage and Hour Litigation and Class Action lawsuits.

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@bandlerlaw.com

(Advertising Supplement)

## LEADERS' DIGEST

*Filipinos are everywhere in America – from the East to the West coast. However, as the second largest Asian American community in America, we still have to empower ourselves to become more visible in the political mainstream. Unknown to us, fellow FilAms are making a difference across the US – as appointed and elected leaders in their respective areas. The Asian Journal Leaders' Digest aims to present to readers these leaders who have made – and continually making a difference for the Filipino American community.*

### Peter Aduja

1st Fil-Am to hold major elected office in the US

**F**ILIPINO immigration to the United States started around the 1920s, when many *Pinoys* went to Hawaii as plantation workers. One of these families who decided to risk everything and pursue the American dream was Peter Aduja's family. A native of Salindig, Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Peter Aduja came to Hawaii in 1928 at age 8 and grew up on the Big Island in Hakalau, where his father worked as a \$1-a-day sugar plantation worker.

Aduja was an only child who never forgot the hardships of his early life and the sacrifices of his parents. He learned the value of education, did well in school, and fulfilled the hopes of his immigrant parents.



"We came from nothing. We slept on plain wooden boards and cooked over an open fire," Aduja described his early years in Hawaii. He graduated from Hilo High, majored in government and history at the University of Hawaii, and was one of 50 local boys who volunteered in 1944 and served with the US Army's 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment in the Philippines in 1945.

After his discharge from the military in 1946, Aduja taught briefly at Na'alehu Elementary & Intermediate School on the Big Island before earning his law degree from Boston University School of Law in 1951.

In 1954, Peter Aduja became the first Filipino-American elected to public office in the United States. He won in his bid for a seat in the Hawaii House of Representatives. He served one two-year term and went to work for the Department of At-

torney General.

He also served as a District Court judge from 1960 to 1962. After statehood was achieved, he was elected three times, first in 1966, to the Hawaii House of Representatives. He also was elected as a delegate to the 1968 Constitutional Convention.

Peter A. Aduja was an attorney, patriot, politician and community volunteer who was a distinguished example of an American dream come true for Filipino immigrants. He maintained steadfast commitments to The Salvation Army's adult rehabilitation center, Boys Scouts of America, Big Brothers of Hawaii and more than 30 other community organizations.

Aduja married Melodie "Lesing" Cabalona and had two children, Jay Peter and Melodie, who eventually became a Hawaii State Senator. He died in 2007. ■

## Caneda Law Group: Providing law services to people who truly matter

**B**EING caught in a legal matter or dispute is always difficult. Finding which firm amongst countless ones to represent you during such terrifying and worrying times adds to the difficulty. This is why it is so important that when choosing representation in your case, you should choose a firm that not only possesses proper certifications, credentials and experience, but one where you can place your fullest trust and confidence in as well.

Caneda Law Group, a Filipino owned and operated firm dedicated to providing legal services in Bankruptcy, Family Law, Wills & Trusts and Business Law, is a firm you can truly depend on to handle legal matters. They understand the issues and concerns which Filipinos in the US experience during these challenging times. They are fully committed to servicing the Filipino community in providing legal services because they believe that there are few dedicated legal professionals who can truly understand and are committed to the Filipino-American community. Caneda Law Group not only has experience in handling cases within the Federal and State courts throughout California, they also provide their clients one-on-one attention with an attorney who will work on their case from start to finish.

Caneda Law Group's main practice is Bankruptcy Law. They service clients in consumer bankruptcy and represent them in Bankruptcy Court for Chapter 7 or Chapter 13 cases. They assist in stopping creditor harassment, wage garnishments, repossessions, and will halt foreclosure of your home even if you are behind in payments. They are skilled at finding strategies to help

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In addition, the firm also offers other legal services. With Family Law, the attorneys at Caneda Law Group help with dissolution of marriage, legal separation, property distribution, and sensitive child custody issues. For Estate Planning, the attorneys will help in protecting your assets and planning for your family's future by providing legal advice in the preparation of your will and/or trust, no matter how large or modest your assets may be. For those involved in business ventures, their Business Law practice can review and draft legally binding contracts and provide counsel in creating the proper business form, no matter what size the business is, whether a corporation, a limited liability company, partnership or a sole partnership. Caneda Law Group's current partners are Ruel Toledo Caneda and Kristen Lu.

Ruel Caneda has worked as a civil litigation attorney and bankruptcy attorney for one of the nation's largest consumer bankruptcy firms. He has extensive experience in Chapter 7 and 13 consumer bankruptcy. He also acquired a Certificate in Business Law during law school and worked for in-house counsel of various corporations. In addition, Ruel has also practiced foreclosure prevention litigation and has a real estate license in which he helped a number of clients in financial difficulty save their homes.

Kristen Lu, on the other hand, has worked at and managed two prominent consumer

bankruptcy firms specializing in Chapter 7 and 13 bankruptcies. In addition, she has supervised and personally managed countless bankruptcies cases from consultation to case conclusion, having attended and represented clients at their bankruptcy court hearings. She also has experience in Family Law and Workers' Compensation Law.

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