

COMMUNITY

JOURNAL

YOUR IMMIGRATION SOLUTION



ATTY. ROBERT REEVES & JOSEPH I. ELIAS

H-1B availability

tually guarantees backlog and processing delays of several years before an H-1B worker will be able to come on board with an employer.

This alarming movement in Congress is being challenged by advocacy groups, lawyers and economists with hard empirical data on the benefits to the US economy, workforce and society these tax-paying H-1B workers bring to the US. The troubled US economy and rising unemployment is a major impetus behind the push to restrict and hobble the H-1B category. H-1B opponents are

lief Program (TARP) and bail-out funds from using the H-1B program. Congress is already lumping H-1B employees in the same group as executive who received massive bonuses while their companies took on massive losses. Is a H-1B software engineer working at a troubled bank to develop and improve computer systems to safeguard customers' private data really a villain? Is the decision to employ H-1B professionals the reason behind the global financial mess? Hardly.

Potential H-1B workers and employers should take advantage of the remaining H-1B visa numbers while there is still a chance. This availability should not be squandered because next year the H-1B category, as we know it today, may no longer be available. It may transform into a bureaucratic and overly burdensome process that is not viable for employers. An employer today may be able to wait until October for a talented foreign accountant to start working. That same employer will most likely not be able to wait two years before that talented accountant will be allowed to start working.

“The H-1B visa status is a temporary employment status for occupations that require a specialized bachelor's degree for entry into the field.”

asking how can we take away jobs from Americans and give them to foreigners, especially our unemployed. Proponents of H-1B are working hard to educate the public and Congress on how the facts, figures, and numbers show H-1Bs do not take away jobs.

If unemployment continues to rise, members of Congress are going to be politically hard pressed to explain why they support an immigration program that has the appearance of taking jobs away from US workers. Emotions can very easily overcome the facts in the decision making process. Many of us are working towards not allowing it to come to this.

But, there is a chance the H-1B category will be changed. Just this year we saw restrictions placed on US companies that accept Troubled Asset Re-

lieving Program (TARP) and bail-out funds from using the H-1B program.

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.

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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)

The Voice of FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials—regardless of political affiliation—in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

Peter Aduja

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

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO
AJPress

FILIPINO 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.



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 Attorney General.

He also served as a District Court judge from 1960 to 1962.

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.

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 Hawai'i 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. ■

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