

COMMUNITY JOURNAL

YOUR IMMIGRATION SOLUTION



ATTY. ROBERT REEVES & JOSEPH I. ELIAS

Representation in removal proceedings

a disappointing result. During these proceedings, an attorney with the Office of the Chief Counsel will represent the Immigration Service. This government attorney is responsible for establishing the alien is removable from the United States. Although an Immigration Judge will receive and weigh evidence from both the government attorney and the alien, the Immigration Judge will not prepare or present the alien's case. For that, an alien has the opportunity, and the right to obtain an attorney of their own at his or her own expense. A well-presented case by an experienced ICE attorney must be met by a better-prepared case by the alien's representative to ensure an alien can remain in the United States.

As such, it is important to seek a highly skilled and knowledgeable immigration attorney. An experienced attorney will either deny the charges of removability in what is known as a Contested Master Hearing or may seek relief from removal at an Individual Hearing—or both. However, just because a person may be eligible for relief does not mean they will win. It is necessary to present sufficient documentary evidence and oral testimony to convince the Immigration Judge that the alien is eligible and deserving for that relief. The evidence must clearly convince the Immigration Judge that the alien meets all the elements for the relief as set forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act. The alien must also convince the Court to exercise favorable discretion and grant the relief. In other words, an alien must present additional evidence to show the Judge why, despite having overstayed or lied or committed a crime, he or she should be given a second chance

at a life in America.

Statistics indicate that the majority of cases in immigration court are denied. These statistics also show that aliens who were represented by counsel were more successful than those who attempted to represent themselves. The reasons are obvious. In addition to knowing what elements have to be proven, an experienced and knowledgeable attorney also knows the most effective way to present that evidence. A skilled attorney knows the most persuasive evidence to prove extreme or exceptional and extremely unusual hardship, knows how to present evidence of rehabilitation or good moral character, and knows how to present negative as well as positive facts.

It may be tempting to try to save money and represent oneself in immigration court or choose an inexperienced lawyer, but the price of losing the case is much higher than the costs of a good attorney. Do not place your life and your family's future in the hands of an inexperienced attorney. In life it may be good to take risks, but in immigration it is not. You and your family's future depends on it. To be sure, the government will be represented by an experienced attorney; but perhaps more importantly, will you?

 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 Website: 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)

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.

Michele J. Sison

US Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates
 The first Filipino-American to become a US Ambassador

AMBASSADOR Michele J. Sison was nominated to her post by US President George Bush. Her father, Pablo Sison is originally from Pangasinan.

Sison is a career member of the United States' Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor. She was confirmed by the US Senate as Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates on May 6, 2004 and sworn in by Secretary of State Powell on July 12, 2004. Prior to her appointment to the UAE, she served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of South Asian Affairs, charged with providing broad policy oversight of US relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

Ambassador Sison's overseas assignments include service as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. at the US Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan (1999-2002) and as consul General at the US Consulate General in Chennai, India (1996-1999). She also served at the US Missions in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (1993-1996); Douala, Cameroon (1991-1993); Cotonou, Benin (1988-1991); Lome, Togo (1984-1988); and Port-au-Prince, Haiti (1982-1984), as well as in Washington. Ambassador Sison is the recipient of numerous US Department of State awards for exceptional service.

Ambassador Sison was born on May 27, 1959 in Arlington, Virginia. She earned her BA in Political Science from Wellesley College and also studied at the London School of Economics.



She shortly served as the Chargé D'Affaires of Lebanon before officially becoming the US Ambassador to Lebanon in June 2008. She has two daughters in college. ■

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