

INTRODUCTION OF HIS PRIVATE BILL FOR THE RELIEF OF JUDITH TANJOH AND HER CHILDREN SERGE, MARIE, EMMANUEL AND ROGER TIKUM

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced a bill for the relief of Judith Tanjoh and her children Serge, Marie, Emmanuel and Roger Tikum.

This family last entered the United States in 1988 in A-2 diplomatic status from the Republic of Cameroon when the now deceased husband of Judith Tanjoh was attached to the Cameroon Embassy. For the next several years the family lived in lawful status in the U.S. through December 31, 1997 when the husband was recalled to the Cameroon because of Judith's political activities against the Cameroon government.

Cameroon has been found by the U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices to possess a "poor human rights record", continuing to commit "numerous serious abuses". After her husband's recall, Judith decided to file for asylum. However, in turn her application was denied by the INS Asylum Office, the Immigration Judge, the Board of Immigration Appeals, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit.

When the Board of Immigration Appeals "affirmed without opinion" the denial of the asylum application by the Immigration Judge on December 17, 2002, it also permitted the family to "voluntarily depart the U.S. . . . within 30 days from the date of this order or any extension beyond that time as may be granted by the district director [of the INS]". Within that 30 day period, Judith's attorneys filed for an extension of the voluntary departure period and a Petition for Review in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit. Each filing was in accordance with the family's statutory and regulatory rights.

The INS has never responded to the request for extension of the voluntary departure period. The 4th Circuit issued its mandate on November 10, 2003 "enforcing the Board's order of December 17, 2002". Of course, part of that order was permitting the family to voluntarily depart within 30 days.

While these proceedings were pending, INS issued Judith authorization to work and she obtained employment as a certified nursing assistant. Her employer has sponsored her (and her children derivatively) for lawful permanent residence via the Labor Certification process. That application, initially filed prior to April 30, 2001, has been certified by the U.S. Department of Labor and an Immigrant Worker's Visa Classification Petition has been pending with INS since July, 2003.

An INS General Counsel's Memo advises INS Government Attorneys to no longer apply the "exceptional and compelling circumstances" standard to motions to reopen for consideration of adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence for persons who have been in deportation proceedings. The Memo instructs that the INS should join in such a motion (which otherwise could not be filed if more than 3 months have expired since the decision of the Board of Immigration Ap-

peals) if the alien is statutorily eligible and warrants a favorable exercise of discretion. Judith's attorneys have twice requested the INS Chief Counsel's Office in Baltimore to join in such a motion in this case. Since Judith's labor certification was timely filed to allow her to adjust her status to permanent residence, she is statutorily eligible.

The family also clearly warrants a favorable exercise of discretion. Judith has been a hard-working, tax-paying certified nursing assistant for several years as she has worked with INS permission. The children have successfully progressed through our school system for the last 15 years. Roger Tikum graduated college and is now married, employed and living in Wisconsin. Although his wife is a U.S. citizen who has filed a Visa Petition to accord him Immediate Relative status, because he was previously riding on his mother's denied asylum application he faces deportation. Serge won a football scholarship to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst where he is a starting linebacker and an excellent student. Marie is doing well at Montgomery Community College. Emmanuel is a star football player at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, where he has also made honor roll.

The Tanjoh/Tikum family are not criminals. They are not terrorists. The children fear being uprooted from their true home in the U.S. and forced to live in a human rights abusive country which they do not know and whose predominant language they do not speak.

Yet, the INS Government Attorneys have coldly rejected each overture for clemency. First, by insisting that the harsher "exceptional and compelling circumstances" standard applies and that these circumstances were neither exceptional nor compelling. Second, by stating that the family was not statutorily eligible for permanent residence because they overstayed the Board of Immigration Appeals' December 17, 2002 Order granting a 30 day voluntary departure period even though the INS has never responded to the extension requests and even though the family timely pursued their Petition for Review rights to the 4th Circuit which only enforced the Board's Order on November 10, 2003.

Therefore, today I have introduced a Private Bill that will enable Judith Tanjoh and the Tikum children to obtain permanent residency. I hope my action today will help bring this heartbreaking story to a close.

TRIBUTE TO ALEWEL'S COUNTRY MEATS

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to honor Alewel's Country Meats for their contribution in shipping more than 1,000 pounds of beef jerky to provide our Missouri National Guardsmen serving in Iraq a taste of home.

Alewel's Country Meats was started in the year 1932 by Hugo and Emil Alewel of Concordia, Missouri. Originally called Alewel Brothers, the name was later changed to Alewel's Country Meats in 1964. The plant grew to enormous size and in 1974 they expanded to Warrensburg, Missouri. My good

friend, Roger Alewel, once ran Alewel's Country Meats, and his able son, Randy, now runs the company.

Alewel's Country Meats is known for their prize winning country hams, bacon, and sausage which are produced from the freshest meat of mid-Missouri. With a legacy of over 70 years, Alewel's Country Meats has become known not only for their quality meats but also for their charitable donations to rural Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, the generous contribution by Alewel's Country Meats is inspirational to all of us. I know the Members of the House will join me in paying tribute to the outstanding commitment to our service members shown by the men and women who work there.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I was detained on Thursday, July 15 and Monday, July 19, 2004. Had I been present I would have voted in the following manner: "Yea" on roll No. 385, "nay" on roll No. 386, "yea" on roll No. 387, "nay" on roll No. 388, "nay" on roll No. 389, "nay" on roll No. 390, "yea" on roll No. 391, "yea" on roll No. 392, and "yea" on roll No. 393.

HONORING THE 32ND MILITARY POLICY COMPANY

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize before this House the courageous soldiers of the 32nd Military Police Company, who tomorrow will return home to Wisconsin after spending 16 months fighting for peace and stability in Iraq.

In the face of constant danger, the members of the 32nd helped pave the way for Iraq's steady march toward democracy. Throughout their tour, these brave men and women provided vital security in and around Baghdad, and helped train the new civilian Iraqi police force. Their tireless efforts proved instrumental in helping the new Iraqi government take control of their fledgling democracy, and their sacrifice reminds us all that freedom is not free.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to pay tribute to the 32nd Military Police Company. With 23 Purple Hearts awarded, their unit suffered more injuries from hostile action than any Wisconsin National Guard unit since World War II. On behalf of the citizens of Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District, and a grateful nation, it is my honor to recognize and welcome home these great Americans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, on July 9, 2004, I inadvertently missed rollcall vote 357.