

**LEGAL RIGHTS**



By Atty. Johnson Lazaro

# Compassion From an Immigration Officer

SOME say that man is inherently good. Even though horrific stories usually make the headlines, there are times that faith in humanity is affirmed. Take my friend whom I will refer to as DJ (not his real initials). DJ is an immigration officer who is charged with catching those who commit immigration fraud.

Immigration officers have generally developed a notorious reputation in the immigrant community. They terrorize immigrants by raiding the workplace. They have been known to knock down doors in pursuit of an overstaying "alien." Alien is a term the government uses for nonimmigrants. They are trained to catch the people pretending to be married. They are the gatekeepers, the border patrol, the men and women whose job it is to keep all "illegals" and would-be "illegals" out of the United States.

In marriage fraud interviews, a couple arrives at the immigration office with a plethora of documentation. They have documentation of their marriage, including the license, invitations, and wedding photo album. Some couples purchased their home together within a month following the marriage, and all of the utilities, credit card bills, and bank accounts are in both names, with all addresses matching their home address. It is immediately obvious to anyone that the marriage is genuine. These are usually the type of cases that are approved. DJ's job is to interview these

couples. The immigration service reviews all marital relationships. Each relationship is scrutinized as a possible sham. The couple must assure the immigration service that the marriage was not only bona fide at inception, but that they are being honest about how they have conducted their relationship. DJ does his job well. He does not believe in giving preferential treatment to anyone. He is fair and dignified.

To my surprise, DJ he confided recently that he intends to seek another position within the department. He believes that there are officers who are simply out there to catch people. There are anti-immigrants hiding behind government badges. He is disappointed in the behavior of some of the officers that he works with. When he tries to be fair, he is sometimes criticized. They chide him with being too lenient on applicants. He is too soft-hearted, they say. They say that he does not have the guts to deny applications and possibly send some people back to their home country. And because of this, he was forced to transfer.

While many who serve as immigration officers are good people, I can't disagree with the notion that many use their authority to intimidate and wield raw power over helpless immigrants. But DJ refuses to buy into the idea that the badge is a license to scare people. He knows that in order to promote the efficient and effective enforcement of the immigration laws and the interests of justice, he must respect and dignify all who comes before him.

DJ is aware that the

consequences of his decisions can be dire, with an erroneous judgment affecting an applicant for life. For people who have lived in this country for years, an adverse decision may mean that they have to return to their home country. They may have nothing upon return. Where do they live? What happens to their children? These questions are in DJ's mind as he interviews - well aware that the wrong decision may send a family to a life of misery.

There are those whose only theme and reason for survival is to hurt others. They get satisfaction in seeing others fail and suffer. But DJ sees compassion and forgiveness as part of his job. And this is why he must leave. He must move away from the destructive culture of the Immigration Service. I am not sure what section of Homeland Security he is headed to. But he will bring compassion to that place. I still have faith in humanity. For every bad thing that happens in this world there may be a million positive things that happen as well. DJ is one of them. I wish him well

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**Atty. Johnson Lazaro represents immigrants in all Federal Courts in the United States. Lazaro and Associates is a Filipino-owned law firm that specializes in difficult immigration cases as well as business immigration and family unification. The firm's offices are located in San Francisco and Fremont/Union City in California, and Makati, Philippines, with telephone (415) 278-9577 and e-mail Law@LazaroLaw.com. Visit the website at www.LazaroLaw.com.**

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 (Advertising Supplement)

# Xoom Adds 50% More Cash Pick-up Locations in the Philippines

Announces expanded partnership with Cebuana Lhuillier Pawnshops and adds One Network Bank Retail Branches as cash pick-up locations

SAN FRANCISCO - Xoom Corporation, the fastest growing money transfer service to the Philippines, has made it even more convenient for Filipinos to receive money. In addition to all Equitable PCI Bank branches, Xoom is now available in a total of 700 Cebuana Lhuillier pawnshop locations and in all One Network Bank's Mindanao branches.

Xoom continues to offer direct deposit to any bank account and free home deliveries. Home delivery drivers do not expect tips.

"We are extremely pleased

to bring One Network Bank and the additional Cebuana Lhuillier locations into our network," said John Kunze, Xoom's CEO. "It makes our service even more convenient for many, many families in cities and in the rural areas, and we will now have one of the most accessible money transfer networks in the country."

With transfers from its Xoom.com website costing as little as \$3.50, Xoom offers a convenient and inexpensive means of sending money to the Philippines. Find out more about Xoom's fast and inexpensive money transfer



John Kunze services by visiting www.xoom.com. Don't wait in line, Xoom it online.  
 (Advertising Supplement)

# More...

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 person listed on the labor certification. The final limitation is premium processing is not available where the original labor certification was lost and the CIS needs to obtain a duplicate from the Department of Labor.

Another misconception about the program is that the 15-day clock is absolute. If the CIS sends a request for additional evidence (RFE), a new 15-day

calendar period starts on the day the employer responds.

Premium processing can be beneficial to many as long as one understands the extent of the program and sets expectations accordingly. Rumors and misinformation often lead to frustrating and unsatisfying results. If you think your case is eligible for premium processing or have questions about the program, you should consult with competent immigration counsel to obtain accurate information.

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**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, Beijing 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)

# P38-B...

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 GDP to grow next year by 4.7-5.3 percent, as against the government's target of 5.7-6.5 percent, noting that prospects of slower growth in Japan and the United States "may retard export growth" and the drought-inducing El Niño weather disruption could cut agricultural productivity.

If GDP growth will be 5.3 percent and revenue effort will be 16.3 percent, the revenue shortfall will be P29.2 billion, it said.

If GDP growth will be 4.7 percent and revenue effort will be 16.3 percent, the revenue shortfall will be P38.3 billion,

it added.

The CPBD also considered domestic concerns, like the 2007 elections and other political uncertainties.

It said that if the revenue shortfall would reach P38.3 billion, it would translate into a budget deficit of P101.3 billion, or 1.5 percent of GDP.

Failure to meet the revenue target would mean resorting to more borrowings "unless cash disbursements are kept within tolerable limits to project a good bottom line," the CPBD said.

It said that the expected total government borrowing for 2007 could even be higher than the P390.8 billion that government has projected "because what was reflected in the government's financing

program is already net of loans maturing during the year and contribution to the bond sinking fund."

Actually, it said, borrowings will total P1.02 trillion.

"Government spending that could support development programs has been stymied owing to poor tax collections and debt overhang. It is important, therefore, to sustain fiscal reforms that could enhance resource mobilization," the congressional think tank said.

It said that the policy issues that confront that Arroyo administration for fiscal year 2007 involve funding "creative" ways to provide public goods, improving investment climate, increasing productivity and securing the gains of reform measures. (INQ7)

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