

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2012

Mr. Calvin McCormick
Field Office Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
31 Hopkins Plaza
Baltimore, MD 21201-2825

Dear Mr. McCormick:

I am writing on behalf of my constituents, the Acuña family, requesting deferment of removal proceedings against Jorge Acuña (A97-640-135); Blanca Susana Mendez Pinto (A97-640-134); and Jorge Steven Acuña (A97-640-136). The family is currently detained at the Snowhill Detention Center in Salisbury, Maryland.

In 2001, the Acuña family fled to the United States to escape the political violence of their native country Colombia. Upon entry, they filed for political asylum with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Unfortunately, due to ineffective legal representation, their petitions for political asylum were denied and a final order of removal was issued. I understand that their counsel, Anthony Gutierrez, was subsequently disbarred from the practice of law.

Jorge Steven Acuña, who is now 18 years old, came with his family to the United States when he was 8 years old. He is a brilliant and talented young man. In 2011, he graduated with a 3.8 grade point average from Northwest High School in Germantown, Maryland while earning 21 AP college credits and playing sports. After graduating from high school, Jorge Steven attended Montgomery College. A Dean's List student, he is expected to complete a two-year course of study in just two semesters. His dream is to become a surgeon and to help those in need.

The Acuña family have been upstanding and productive members of our community. Their removal from the United States will cause extreme economic and emotional hardship to them and to the countless friends and community members who rely on them. Given these extenuating circumstances, I respectfully request that removal proceedings against the Acuña family be deferred. All correspondence can be sent to me at the following address:

51 Monroe Street, Suite 507
Rockville, MD 20850
FAX: (301) 424-5992

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If you need additional information, please contact Lillian Cruz in my Rockville office at (301) 424-3501. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the beginning.

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

CVH/lc