

By JOSEPH G. LARIOSA

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Filipino Ph. D. Candidate Gets Released from Immigration Detention, as His Deportation Held in Abeyance – Thanks to Rep. Brad Sherman’s Efforts

CHICAGO (*jGLi*) -- The Filipino honor graduate of Harvard University got a belated Christmas gift when he was released from detention after Christmas.

According to Matt Farrauto, spokesman of Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Sherman Oaks), reports of the release of Mark Farrales were accurate but so far “no private bill” has been filed that would make Mr. Farrales a U.S. citizen.

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Farrales' lawyer, Leon Hazany, has not made any comment when reached by e-mail by this reporter although he was quoted by the *Los Angeles Times* as saying that the one-year reprieve given by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to Mr. Farrales "could be enough time to secure citizenship but it will be difficult. I think his case is strong. But it's not what I think that matters; it's up to the (U.S.) Board of Immigration Appeals."

Farrales, 31, is a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard, who was pursuing his doctorate degree at the University of California in San Diego when he was arrested by ICE agents in November in his home in his Reseda, Los Angeles, California "for being in the country illegally."

Last Dec. 21, Representative Sherman asked the ICE to join Farrales in his request to re-open his immigration case before the U.S. BIA "as an individual and not being (lumped) with" the case of his deceased father.

After Christmas, Representative Sherman was informed that Mr. Farrales was released from the Mira Loma Detention Center in Lancaster, California.

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"It's clearly in our national interest that young people who came here through no fault of their own and have proven themselves to be the good citizens of the future should be a part of this country," Sherman was quoted as saying.

"It took days for it to sink in how lucky I am," a jubilant Farrales was quoted by the *Times* as saying. "But being allowed to stay here is not guaranteed."

Farrales was released on "deferred action," which gives him time to come up with compelling and humanitarian reasons that would allow him to pursue legal options, according to an ICE statement.

Before Christmas, Rep. Brad Sherman and the offices of Senators Barbara Boxer (Dem.-CA) and Dianne Feinstein (Dem.-CA) were asked by Farrales' lawyer to help him file a private bill in Congress on behalf of Mr. Farrales.

The private bill, though a long shot, will delay Farrales' deportation while he pursues avenues to legalize his status.

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A spokesperson of Senator Boxer told this reporter, "Mark Farrales' lawyer reached out to us just recently on this situation. Senator Boxer is reviewing the case."

While Senator Feinstein is still waiting for some documents from Farrales' lawyer before she files a private bill before the U.S. Congress that could grant Farrales U.S. citizenship.

Mr. Farrales said he planned to pursue his doctorate degree on government-corruption reform at UC San Diego.

Farrales would have been one of the thousands of students who would have benefited from the DREAM Act that did not pass the U.S. Senate although it hurdled the House of Representatives.

Under the bill, it would have extended a path to citizenship to illegal and deportable alien students who graduate from US high schools, who are of good moral character and have been in the country continuously and illegally for at least five years prior to the bill's enactment, the opportunity to earn conditional permanent residency if they complete two years in the military or two years at a four-year institution of higher learning.

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Mr. Farrales arrived in the U.S. with his parents in 1990 when he was ten years old just days before his father, Jaime Farrales, a lawyer, was shot outside their home in Quezon City in the Philippines

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Before his family's visas expired, his father applied for political asylum, saying that they are fleeing from his attackers.

The petition for asylum was denied but his father appealed. However, when his father died in 2006, the petition appeared to have been denied as well before the Board of Immigration Appeals. # # #

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