

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ROBERT VIVAR, REPATRIATED MILITARY FAMILY MEMBER

**U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and
Citizenship**

Chairwoman Lofgren and the Members of Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship

Hearing on “Oversight of Immigrant Military Members and Veterans”

June 29, 2022

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren

Chairwoman, Subcommittee

on Immigration and Citizenship

House Judiciary Committee

U.S. House of Representatives

2141 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lofgren and Members of the Subcommittee,

My name is Robert Vivar, I recently repatriated on Veterans Day November 11, 2021. I am very grateful for the work and coordination between my attorney team of Munger Tolles and Olson Under supervising attorney Joseph Lee, and the Immigrant Military Members and Veterans initiative team led by Mrs. Debra Rogers.

While I am not a veteran I am part of an extensive military family. My son is an active duty Master Sergeant with the Calif Air National Guard and my grandson is a Private First Class with the USMC. I currently reside with my better half in San Diego CA, where we share an apartment with her son, a USMC veteran who deployed two tours in Iraq, earning several commendations including a Purple Heart, and is receiving treatment at the V.A. for and other service connected injuries.

The reason for my testimony is to share with you the work I have done beginning early 2014 on behalf of our deported non-citizen veterans. Although they are deported to the countries they were born in, for most of them, these countries are foreign to them. Because they arrived in the U.S.A. at a very young age. During these years, I have dedicated a great portion of my time aiding our deported veterans to integrate into their country of birth, as well as assisting them with obtaining VA benefits and with pursuing their repatriation. I help connect them with accredited, V.A. agents as well as non profit attorneys and organizations

Recently, the work has included connecting veterans with the IMMVETS team to access their rightly earned V.A. benefits as well as any legal relief they may qualify for to return home to the only country they call home and are willing to give their life to defend.

During these years, I have had the opportunity to spend countless hours, with many deported veterans, as they struggle to live everyday with the trauma of separation from their family, from their life in the U.S.A. as well as the horrors they endured on the battlefield. The United States Military is the greatest fighting force in the world and the training and their performance on the battlefield are testament to this. However when these brave heroes return home and have trouble adapting to civilian life, as many veterans run afoul of the law, unlike citizen veterans, non citizen veterans are put in removal proceedings instead of receiving treatment for their combat or military related injuries. PTSD/TBI/MST, are in many cases the contributing factor of the veterans behavior. There are countless phone calls in the middle of the night as well as emails from deported veterans. Honorably Discharged Veterans, that are practically at the point that they can and no longer want to endure the struggle, they see their life not worth fighting for any longer. However their military training and memories of family and love for the United States keep them hanging on for dear life.

With the recent creation of the IMMVETS, program, we have seen several veterans repatriated, while others are in the process of review. We understand the initiative is work in progress and pray that this committee continues its support of the program and listens to the needs to improve the program and offer lasting solutions to end the injustice of deporting those willing to give their life to defend the Constitution of the USA. We pray that the existing policy Citizenship at basic training, receives the needed support so every non citizen recruit has the opportunity to complete their citizenship process at basic training graduation and therefore never have to worry about having to be removed from the country they swore allegiance to protect.

I thank you for the opportunity to address this committee.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Vivar

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