

American Muslim Empowerment Network

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July 16, 2017

Honorable Paul A. DeFonzo
U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration Court
1000 Second Ave, Suite 2500
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Deportation of Muhammad Zahid Chaudhry

Dear Judge deFonzo:

I am an attorney and the Executive Director of the American Muslim Empowerment Network (AMEN), a new initiative of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound (MAPS). I am writing in support of Muhammad Zahid Chaudhry, a proud U.S. Army veteran and member of the American Muslim community, whose deportation hearing is before you on Monday.

Mr. Chaudhry is a disabled U.S. Army veteran who has been decorated for his service. He sustained injuries while serving our nation that have left him permanently in a wheelchair. Military officials have recommended Mr. Chaudhry for citizenship and even stated that to “deny Zahid citizenship would be a crime.”

In addition to having served our nation honorably, Mr. Chaudhry has volunteered thousands of hours serving the community in various ways. He is exactly the kind of person we want in our country. Unfortunately, his efforts to gain citizenship for the last several years have faced significant delays. This is so even though Mr. Chaudhry has not broken any U.S. laws, and he qualifies for expedited citizenship based on his military service and marriage of 16 years to a U.S. citizen, Ann Chaudhry. Even the U.S. government admits that Mr. Chaudhry meets all the requirements for naturalization as a military veteran. The apparent years-long delay and surprise deportation hearing on Monday, July 17, is hard to understand.

As an attorney, faith leader, and advocate for justice, I respectfully request that you grant Mr. Chaudhry’s request to stay in the country, and allow him and his wife to live their lives together in peace and comfort as they continue to serve and contribute positively to their communities.

Very truly yours,

A. Afzali

Aneelah Afzali, Esq.