

July 16, 2017

Judge Paul deFonzo
Immigration Court
100 Second Ave, Suite 2500
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Judge deFonzo,

I write in support of the momentous request of Ann and Muhammed Zahid Chaudhry that he be given citizenship in the country that he loves! Now threatened with deportation, Zahid, a highly decorated American veteran, was discharged honorably from the U. S. Army and, later, the National Guard. His distinguished military career includes many extra duty and leadership roles that led to numerous service and achievement metals and ribbons, but unfortunately to injuries that left him in perpetual need of a wheelchair.

As a military veteran he has volunteered thousands of hours serving communities in various ways. Throughout my nine-year relationship with him as a fellow member of the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation (OUUC), I witnessed his deep, sustained commitment to this country through his expressions of love for it and his voice and activity in social justice issues. I noted, too, the widespread high regard and deep appreciation extended to him by congregation members. He is highly esteemed and appreciated, as well, by the nearby Quaker community with whom he collaborates on addressing social justice issues. Beyond the strong support from the South Puget Sound community, he has received bipartisan support from federal and state legislators including Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray.

Recently, I have learned about the harassment and other maltreatments he suffered from agents of the Controlled Application Review and Resolution Program, most notably the recent shocking news of a turn from a willingness to settle to a threat of deportation! Moreover, I understand that Zahid qualifies for U.S. citizenship because of his marriage to Ann, his wife of 16 years. Together these realities raise questions about a possible vendetta or discrimination against a member of the Muslim faith. Given what I know about the widespread support for a citizenship that has clearly been earned, I find this news of his treatment deeply disturbing. I am certain that you will get this same reaction in letters from other supporters. I can ask here that you find gross injustice in this whole enterprise and make the judgment that this true American deserves. I hope you can help to Bring Zahid Home!

Respectfully yours,
Bernard M. Steckler, Ph D
Professor Emeritus, Seattle University
Member, OUUC