

DECLARATION OF STEPHANIE IZAGUIRRE

I, Stephanie Izaguirre, make the following declaration based on my personal knowledge and declare under the penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that the following is true and correct.

1. I am an immigration attorney in private practice. I manage an immigration law firm in Colorado Springs, Colorado, with two paralegals and one support staff. Our practice focuses exclusively on immigration issues. I have been practicing law for nine years and exclusively representing clients in immigration proceedings for over four years.
2. My law office is located approximately 472 miles from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia, New Mexico, where the Department of Homeland Security is detaining hundreds of mothers and children. I spent over \$850 in costs associated with my travel to and from Artesia and expenses during the four days my paralegal and I spent volunteering there.
3. Prior to opening my own law firm, I worked as an adjudications officer with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. I conducted interviews related to applications for adjustment of status and naturalization, as well as removal of conditions on permanent residence, adoption petitions, and the naturalization of minors.
4. During the four years I have practiced in Colorado, I have represented several detained individuals at both their credible fear interviews and their asylum hearings before the Immigration Judge.
5. In Artesia, I joined a group of approximately eight lawyers, all of whom were members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). We provided legal consultations and representation on a pro bono basis from [REDACTED]
6. When I first arrived at the detention center in Artesia on [REDACTED] I had to wait approximately 45 minutes before being permitted to enter the building. I had arrived at 6:45 am to meet with several women who had credible fear interviews at 7:30 am that morning. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers did not allow me into the detention area until 7:30 am. At my request, USCIS officers agreed to allow the women whose interviews had been scheduled at 7:30 am to be interviewed close to noon to give me time to meet with them. Consequently, however, this meant that other women who wanted representation had their credible fear interviews that morning, and did not have a chance to receive any legal advice beforehand.
7. During my conversations with approximately 15 women detained at Artesia, all of them indicated that they had requested to speak with an attorney prior to their credible fear interviews, but were never told that there were lawyers available to consult with them. I also learned that 12 other women were scheduled to be deported the next day. In an attempt to prevent these 12 women from being deported without speaking to an attorney, I filed requests for deferred action

on their behalf. Deferred action is a discretionary decision by DHS not to pursue enforcement against a person for a specific period.

8. Upon learning that I had filed deferred action requests on behalf of these women, Enrique Davila, the Supervisory Detention & Deportation Officer, told me that he was going to deny all of the requests. He said that deferred action requests were not an appropriate form of relief. He said that the appropriate action would be to file stays of removal on behalf of these women, along with filing fees. The filing fees would need to be paid in Midland, Texas. After stating that filing stays of removal was the appropriate course of action, he said that he would deny the stays of removal in all of the cases and as a result, I was "wasting [my] time." He said he "would deny anything [we] filed."

9. ICE officers only permitted me to meet with clients in a room called the "law library." The room contained two desktop computers, two printers and one copier. The computers did not have internet access, and one of the computers was not connected to any printer.

10. On one side of the room were two desks where we were allowed to meet with clients. ICE officers approached us every hour, even during client meetings, to conduct head counts.

11. During my time volunteering at Artesia, I observed that women had difficulty accessing phones. Often women were confused about when they were allowed to use available phones. They were told that they could use phones to call lawyers, but could only call lawyers after their normal business hours.

12. After I left Artesia, I attempted to call a telephone number that was provided to us so that we could call and speak with our clients. I called the number approximately ten times over a two-day period but no one ever answered the phone.

13. After I left Artesia, I filed a motion to appear telephonically on [REDACTED] before a hearing scheduled on [REDACTED] to review a negative credible fear determination. The immigration judge never ruled on the motion. Fortunately, another attorney was able to stand in for me at the last minute.

14. On [REDACTED] my third day at Artesia, we created a flyer to help the women understand that we were available to consult with them. The flyer said, in Spanish, "Know your Rights" and went on to explain the rights of an individual facing a credible fear interview.

15. On [REDACTED] after consulting with a woman, I offered her a flyer to share with other detainees. She said that she was "scared" to take a flyer and that she was not "allowed" to have a flyer. She recounted that an ICE officer had screamed at another woman who had tried to pass the flyer out to other detainees. The flyer was easily identifiable because it was printed on bright green paper.

16. Credible fear interviews often were scheduled with no notice to the women or the attorneys who represented them.

17. I observed that ICE officers did not tell the women where they were going when escorting them to credible fear interviews or consultations with pro bono attorneys. As a result, women would not bring any documentation or other legal papers with them to their credible fear interviews or their meetings with pro bono attorneys.

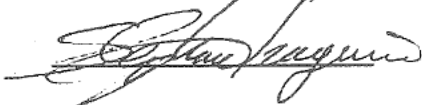
18. At the beginning of the week, prior to their credible fear interviews or immigration court hearings, deportation officers would take the women to a holding room near the law library where they were able to observe the team of lawyers. As a result, more women would ask to speak with us. ICE thereafter began taking the women to a holding room where they could no longer see the lawyers.

19. I observed one credible fear interview during the time I volunteered at the Artesia facility. The environment in which the interview was conducted was not conducive to my client explaining why she feared returning to El Salvador. When she discussed her fear of gangs in El Salvador, the asylum officer seemed impatient and began to rush through the interview. My client was attempting to explain why she feared that a gang member would kidnap and rape her [REDACTED]. In my experience, my client has a strong asylum claim based on membership in a particular social group. The asylum officer's demeanor throughout the interview was dismissive. When my client's [REDACTED] asked to speak and started to explain why she was afraid to return to El Salvador, the officer interrupted her and told her thank you, but said that he did not need to hear her story.

20. Many women never learned that they could consult with an attorney prior to their credible fear interviews, which took place before they had an opportunity to attend Know Your Rights presentations. These presentations only took place on Thursdays and Fridays. However, the credible fear interviews generally happened three days after a woman arrived in Artesia. Therefore, if a woman arrived on Saturday or Sunday, she would likely be scheduled for a credible fear interview prior to the presentation days.

21. Every woman I met was forced to care for her children and discuss her case simultaneously. Women were breastfeeding their infants and toddlers while trying to focus on their stories. Mothers were forced to recount very traumatic and upsetting details of rape, violence, and kidnapping in the presence of their young children. Women were forced to attend court hearings in front of immigration judges with their children running around the room.

Executed this 14th day of August 2014 at Colorado Springs, Colorado



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