

July 14, 2017

Judge Paul deFonzo
Immigration Court
1000 Second Ave, Suite 2500
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Judge Paul deFonzo,

Few people add to the strength of this country like Muhammad Zahid Chaudhry. Mr. Chaudhry is not only a well known and respected community member – and mentor to many – he is also a decorated disabled U.S. Army veteran who sustained lifelong injuries training troops for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

Mr. Chaudhry has made the ultimate sacrifice for his country, and is already qualified for expedited citizenship based on his Qualified Military service. During his time in the Army he earned medals such as the Reserve Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, United States Army Service Ribbon, and Recruitment Achievement Medal.

Mr. Chaudhry's deep commitment to an ethics of service is further illustrated through his history of volunteering with the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, the Yakima Firefighters, as well as several organizations in Olympia, Washington – where we were first introduced. I frequently run into Mr. Chaudhry at community events, and it is clear that his warmth, talents, and unique contributions to building a just and equitable society make him a natural leader. People of all backgrounds gravitate toward him and countless have been mentor by him. If Mr. Chaudhry were ripped from his family and country, the results would be devastating, not only for him and but for the entire community.

Mr. Chaudhry has not broken any US laws, not even for a minor conviction and he came here legally. The U.S. government admits that Zahid meets all the requirements for naturalization as a military veteran. Additionally, Mr. Chaudhry qualifies for US citizenship based on the fact that he is married to a US citizen; Zahid and Ann have been married over 16 years.

I am very saddened by how the US government has treated Mr. Chaudhry and appalled that he has been threatened with deportation. Mr. Chaudhry has sacrificed for this country and deserves to live in peace and continue to serve and volunteer in his community and home.

Michelle Ryder



YWCA Olympia