

FILIPINOS FRETTING OVER PROPOSED IMMIGRATION REFORM; SWEEPING LEGISLATION WOULD AFFECT GROUP MORE SERIOUSLY THAN OTHERS

San Jose Mercury News (California)

FEBRUARY 25, 1996 Sunday MORNING FINAL EDITION

Copyright 1996 San Jose Mercury News All Rights Reserved

Section: FRONT; Pg. 20A

Length: 553 words

Byline: CAROLYN JUNG, Mercury News Staff Writer

Body

As he has waited patiently for nine years for his children to gain U.S. permission to move here from the Philippines, Rey Villamor of Santa Clara has sent them thousands of dollars, paying for their engineering education in the hope that someday they would work in Silicon Valley.

But if the U.S. Congress adopts **proposed immigration reforms** that would end such family reunification, Villamor might never see his children here.

The **legislation**, which **proposes** to reduce **immigration** by about 30 percent, would hit **Filipinos** particularly hard. Of all the **Filipino** applicants waiting to immigrate to the United States, 93 percent would become ineligible. The effects would be felt strongly in the Bay Area, home in 1990 to 261,273 **Filipino**-Americans - the second-largest **Filipino**-American community in the nation.

"There would be no wait if you came from any other country," said Richard Konda, an Asian Law Alliance attorney in San Jose. "But if you're **Filipino**, you wait 10 to 15 years."

Inbound traffic

Immigration is extremely backlogged for **Filipinos** because so many want to come to the United States, and only 27,558 are allowed in each year.

While the **proposed immigration reforms** could snarl many family ties, in other ways it could benefit the Philippines.

"Why has the Philippines not grown **more** like other countries?" said Edgar Rodriguez, professor of economics at the University of Calgary. "Some say it's because the best people have left. If you make it harder to migrate, it will force these professional and technical people to stay and help the country develop. By forcing people to stay, you force remittances to continue, too."

Blurring the lines

Under the **proposed legislation**, these **immigration** categories would no longer exist:

* Unmarried adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens: of the 70,000 worldwide on the waiting list, 50,000 are **Filipino**.

FILIPINOS FRETTING OVER PROPOSED IMMIGRATION REFORM;SWEEPING LEGISLATION WOULD AFFECT GROUP MORE SERIOUSLY THAN OTHERS

- * Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens: of 260,000 worldwide, 150,000 are **Filipino**.
- * Unmarried adult sons and daughters of permanent residents: of 500,000 worldwide, 40,000 are from the Philippines.
- * Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens: of the 1.5 million worldwide, 280,000 are **Filipino**.

Proponents such as professor Norm Matloff, who has researched **immigration** trends and testified before Congress, wants these categories eliminated because he believes applicants have been dishonest.

"People who come here under family-reunification policy are doing so for the same reason any other immigrant does, and that is economic betterment," Matloff said. "They are not coming here for family reasons."

Worlds apart

Villamor, 57, says his children want to come here to work, but even **more** to be with their parents, whom they haven't seen in seven years.

After immigrating in 1981, Villamor was able to bring his wife and five minor children to the United States seven years later, but not his adult children. Visa applications were approved for the three in 1987, but they faced a wait of **more** than 10 years. So they waited, even delaying marriage because that would change their status and increase their wait.

If his children cannot immigrate, Villamor is prepared to move back to the Philippines to help set them up in business. To him, it will be the United States' loss and the Philippines' gain.

Notes

See related stories on pages 1A, 20A

Graphic

Photo;

PHOTO: GARY REYES - MERCURY NEWS

Rey Villamor holds a photo of 32-year-old son he has not seen in seven years.

[960225 FR 20A 6; color]

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: **IMMIGRATION** (91%); CHILDREN (90%); **LEGISLATION** (89%); US CONGRESS (78%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (77%); ASIAN AMERICANS (76%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (72%); ECONOMICS (70%); ADULTS (69%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (65%)

Company: BAY AREA INSURANCE SERVICES (56%)

FILIPINOS FRETTING OVER PROPOSED IMMIGRATION REFORM;SWEEPING LEGISLATION WOULD
AFFECT GROUP MORE SERIOUSLY THAN OTHERS

Industry: COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (65%)

Geographic: SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, CA, USA (88%); SAN JOSE, CA, USA (73%); SILICON VALLEY, CA, USA (58%); PHILIPPINES (96%); UNITED STATES (96%)

Load-Date: October 23, 2002

End of Document