

## **DAD MAY LOSE ADOPTED CHILD TO ABSURD LAW**

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**Byline:** BY ALBOR RUIZ

### **Body**

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"I am the father of a beautiful 9-year-old undocumented **child** and the pain of a future deportation of my daughter is getting unbearable for my wife and me. As Christians we pray everyday to God for the immigration authorities not to come and knock on our front door. Our constant state of anxiety about our daughter's future is destroying our lives. As an angel of God, she has a right to remain in this country."

That's how Joseph Collar, 63, began the letter he sent two weeks ago to the President and Vice President, as well as to Sen. Harry Reid, Rep. Nancy Pelosi and Sen. Chuck Schumer.

"They haven't answered me yet," he said in despair.

Collar, is taking part today in the March for America in Washington with thousands of immigrants and their supporters from all walks of life. All they are asking for is a fair, and humane immigration reform. But Collar hopes to do much more to call attention to the absurdity of the country's current **laws**.

"I want to tell the American public the nightmare my 9-year-old **adopted** daughter is going through with the immigration authorities," he said.

Collar and his wife, Cathy, 64, of Nutley, N.J., are both U.S. citizens, and for the last seven years have been living a nightmare they cannot fully comprehend.

The story of Neidy Elizabeth, their **adopted** Guatemalan **child** is a poignant example of everything that is wrong with the broken immigration system.

Neidy was brought to this country illegally by her mother when she was 2 years old. She was later abandoned to the Collars, a decent, loving and hardworking family.

Collar was born in Cuba and his wife is a Guatemala native. Both have embraced American values with fervor. For the last 18 years Collar has been the controller/treasurer of a regional frozen food distributor. His wife is a homemaker, and the aunt of Neidy's mother.

The Collars legally **adopted** Neidy in New Jersey in 2004, but all their efforts to have their daughter become a legal resident have crashed against a wall of blind inflexibility.

The dehumanization of our immigration **laws** was made clear by a letter the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services sent on Aug. 31, 2007, to Neidy - then 7 - informing the little girl she cannot become a legal resident.

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"Your petition for change of status has been denied," it said.

It does not matter that Neidy was only 2 when she was brought to the U.S. by a mother who in the past seven years has not once visited the child.

To the Collars' dismay, Neidy, a beautiful, happy girl and an excellent student, could be deported to Guatemala where there is no one - no family, no friends - to take care of her.

"Immigration laws must be morally responsible to an innocent 9-year-old and to us, said Meaghan Tuohey-Kay, a West Orange, N.J., immigration attorney. "The girl had no say, made no choices. Still, she can't get a green card because the law doesn't allow any discretion."

The only solution to Neidy's dilemma would be to get her out of the country and apply for a visa at a U.S. consulate. This could take months and would be expensive. It would mean leaving home and work. Collar says they don't have the means to do it.

"I have made a decision that if there is no immigration reform and no solution to my daughter's plea I will go on a hunger strike in Washington, as close to the White House as I am allowed to," Collar vowed. "I cannot stand the pain any more."

For the sake of the Collars, their little Neidy, and millions of decent, hardworking immigrant families, let's hope for a humane and fair immigration reform.

[aruiz@nydailynews.com](mailto:aruiz@nydailynews.com)

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