

December 13, 2020

Re: Oscar Balladares/Deported Veteran

Balladares44@gmail.com

(505-297-9456)

HONORABLE GOVERNOR MICHELLE LUJÁN-GRISHAM –

I, Oscar Balladares, swear under the penalty of perjury that the following statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

HONORABLE GOVERNOR, I was born in Managua, Nicaragua on October 3, 1977. A civil war ensued in 1979 and my mother got my brother, grandmother and I out of the country and into the United States under President Reagan's amnesty program. We arrived Los Angeles in April 1980. I attended every level of schooling in California, from preschool through college. I graduated Glendale high school in 1995 and 3 months later I entered basic training in the US Army as a 19D CAVALRY SCOUT. I was discharged honorably in 1999. During my service, I was deployed to Bosnia twice during which I developed PTSD from my experiences (I currently have an 80% VA disability rating which includes PTSD, upper and lower back problems, nerve damage in my left leg, hearing loss, bursitis, anxiety). After my discharge I had no clue what to do. The Army did not out process me properly and did not guide me into civilian life. I had no clue I had benefits waiting for me including housing and PTSD counseling. A year and a half later I began to self medicate on Rock cocaine. I had never used drugs or alcohol in my life. From 2001 through 2010 I was homeless and addicted. I was arrested twice for possession of cocaine and was convicted for both. I was placed on probation. I was in immigration proceedings due to these charges from June 2009 through July 2010. I was actually able to beat my case and was released. I then moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico November 2010 and had been there until my June 2020 deportation. My now wife was pregnant with our first child Amari Kai Balladares. I started working at Staples as the electronics supervisor. On September 16, 2016 I had a shift that began at 12pm. My in-laws usually would take care of Amari so we could go to work but I decided to watch him because I had time until my shift. Early in the morning, we went to drop off my wife at Bank of America then we came home and chilled out together. As my shift was nearing, I text grandpa to be at my house by 11am so he could pick Amari up and he agreed. I took my son upstairs with me and laid him on my bed while I got dressed for work. Once I was done, I picked him up and carried him downstairs in my arms. As we were on the second flight of stairs, my left leg completely gave out on me causing me to lose my hold on my son and we both went tumbling down the stairs and ended up at the bottom. When I picked him up, he was breathing but unresponsive so I immediately called grandpa and since he lived literally a block away, we drove him to the hospital. I stayed with Amari the whole time I'm the hospital. I told the doctors what happened yet they still called the police and cyfd came also. Not once did they get my statement. The police asked if I could give them a statement at the station and of course I agreed. When I arrived, they had my wife in the room next door and I could hear her crying her heart out. These cops were coercing her to be against me and they began to lie about my son's condition to blame me for child abuse. Cyfd and the police both told my wife that if she doesn't stop talking to me and if she doesn't make negative statements against me, that they would take the other kids away from her. They arrested me 3 days later and I was convicted of 2d degree child abandonment and 3d degree child abuse. Not once did my attorney Joseph Riggs III want to take this to trial. There was no hard evidence that was unbeatable. He was paid \$27000 through trial and he threatened to withdraw if I took it to trial so out of fear I took the plea that the DA threw at me. It was 6 to 16 years and 5 years probation with 2 years parole. No contact with the family at all. He never once told me the exact immigration consequences of the plea. I did 4

years and was released. After my parole was over, immigration picked me up and took me to Otero county processing center. There was no relief from deportation. My charge was automatically deportable. I was deported June 10 2020 to Nicaragua, a country I do not know. After 40 of my 42 years in the US, I feel lost. I had my permanent resident card since 1989 and no one, not even the Army, told me I have to become a citizen. I just didn't know. So, here I am. Apart from my US citizen wife and 6 children. Apart from my citizen mother, brother, aunts, uncle's, friends. Alone. I fought and bled for my country, the United States, and I believe I earned the right to stay. An ordinary citizen would do their prison time and be released to society but I have suffered not only doing prison time, but being punished twice by being deported. Please, find it in your heart to help me and bring me back. I know and believe that you, Honorable Governor, are a staunch supporter of Latinos and military service members. I see daily in Facebook all of your strong efforts to contain the corona virus in New Mexico. Thank you so much for your consideration and all you've done for many who can't do for themselves. May God bless you and all of yours especially during this Christmas season!

Oscar Balladares