

(February 13, 2008) Lipinski Secures One-Year Stay of Deportation for Corina Turcinovic

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Works with Bipartisan Group to Gain Reevaluation of Case

[Washington D.C.] Today, Corina Turcinovic was granted a one-year stay of deportation by immigration officials after the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law formally requested that immigration officials further investigate Mrs. Turcinovic's situation. The Subcommittee's action occurred as a preliminary step in their consideration of H.R. 5030, a bill introduced by Rep. Lipinski (D-IL) that would allow Corina Turcinovic to remain in the U.S. and apply for permanent legal residency.

"I am extremely pleased that we were successful in gaining another full year of legal residency in the U.S. for Corina while her case continues to be considered," said Rep. Lipinski. "Until today, Corina was facing deportation because of mistakes made by the government that prevented her from gaining permanent legal resident status. But now we have the opportunity to right those wrongs and ensure that Corina is not unjustly removed from this country."

Mrs. Turcinovic entered the United States legally in 1990 when her then-fiancé, Maro Turcinovic, was paralyzed after being hit by a car in New Jersey. Maro was soon transferred to Chicago for rehabilitation care, and Corina - having been given permission by immigration authorities to stay and care for her injured fiancé - came with him. Over the next 14 years, Corina would spend nearly every hour attending to the health needs of Maro, and in 1996, the couple was married. Maro was going through the process of becoming a naturalized citizen, but mistakes by the government prevented the process from being completed before complications stemming from Maro's injuries claimed his life. Because Maro did not become a citizen prior to his death, Corina could not apply for permanent legal status under the expedited procedures available to spouses and widows of U.S. citizens. To help correct this government mistake, Rep. Lipinski introduced a bill on Corina's behalf, H.R. 5030, on January 16, 2008.

Last month, on January 22, last minute efforts of Rep. Lipinski as well as Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Immigration, played a critical role in stopping Corina's deportation as she was being driven to the airport by immigration officials. Republicans Steve King (R-IA, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Immigration) and Lamar Smith (R-TX, Ranking Member of the full Judiciary Committee) also agreed the case deserved a second look, and along with Chairwoman Lofgren, secured today's one-year stay of deportation for Corina.

"There is still more work to be done, but we now will have the time to make the case that Corina's situation is unique and was the result of a mistake by the government," said Rep. Lipinski. "I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee to pass H.R. 5030 and ensure that Corina can gain permanent legal resident status."

When told of today's decision, Mrs. Turcinovic exclaimed, "I am very relieved and incredibly grateful to Congressman Lipinski for his vision and courage, to my attorney John Colbert for never giving up, and to all the beautiful people who have supported me throughout the ordeal. We all believed in the system and today we are convinced it does work. The U.S. is truly an amazing country."