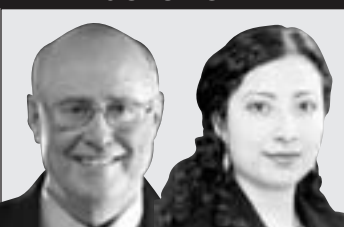


# COMMUNITY

## JOURNAL

### YOUR IMMIGRATION SOLUTION



ATTY. ROBERT REEVES & LORENA LARIOS SHAH

## Immigration raids target individuals with deportation orders

*“People with deportation orders are clearly the most vulnerable to immediate detention and removal from the US. It is important to note that immigration law allows them to reopen their immigration case and pursue some relief that can lead to legal permanent residency and citizenship.”*

IMMIGRATION Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids are becoming a growing concern in the United States. During the month of October, ICE arrested over 2,600 people in the US in the month of September, ICE arrested more than 1,500 people in the state of California. ICE agents target people with deportation orders who failed to depart or departed, but returned to the United States illegally or any one else who has overstayed their visa. According to Virginia Kice, an ICE spokesperson of the people arrested in California, approximately 595 had outstanding deportation orders.

People with deportation orders are clearly the most vulnerable to immediate detention and removal from the US. It is important to note that immigration law allows some individuals with deportation orders to reopen their immigration case

Deportation may be reopened by the filing of a motion to reopen. Generally, a motion to reopen must be filed within 90 days from the date the removal order was issued. A motion to reopen must also state new facts that were not previously available. There are exceptions to the 90-day filing rule.

The following are some examples. First, if a person was ordered removed for failure to appear and did not timely receive notice of the time and place of the hearing. Second, if there is a change in country conditions in the person's home country and the person fears returning. Third, where an alien falls victim to inef-

fective assistance of counsel or fraud by a non-lawyer such as a notary, paralegal, or immigration consultant. A benefit of filing a motion to reopen is that an immigration judge can issue a stay of removal which means that ICE cannot deport that person while the motion is being reviewed. In

some cases a stay of removal is automatically set in place when the motion to reopen is properly filed. Consulting with an experienced immigration lawyer is important given the political climate. The US has a new president-elect and immigration reform is a pressing issue. President-elect Obama has ensured that the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants already in the US will have some path to citizenship. What immigration lawyers do not know right now is whether that will cover individuals with previous deportation orders or those that were deported and re-entered the US.

\*\*\*  
Atty. Reeves has represented clients in numerous landmark immigration cases that have set new policies regarding INS action and immigrants' rights. His offices are located in Pasadena, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Makati City.

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The analysis and suggestions offered in this column do not create a lawyer-client relationship and are not a substitute for the personalized representation that is essential to every case.

(Advertising Supplement)

*“Consulting with an experienced immigration lawyer is important given the political climate. The US has a new president-elect and immigration reform is a pressing issue.”*

and pursue some form of relief that can lead to legal permanent residency and citizenship. It is imperative that individuals with deportation or removal orders seek the immediate assistance of a reputable and experienced immigration lawyer to evaluate if a case can be reopened.

## The Voice of FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials—regardless of political affiliation—in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.



## Hermy B. Almonte

Board Member, San Leandro Unified School District, Area 1

ONE of the new entrants to the growing list of elected officials of Filipino heritage in the Northern California area is Hermy B. Almonte, who won his trustee seat in the San Leandro Unified School District, Area 1, in the recent Nov. 4, 2008 elections.

Born and raised in Cabuyana, Laguna, Philippines, Hermy settled in the United States in 1998 with his wife, Maria Venus Herce Almonte, after a well-traveled career where he worked in the container shipping industry, sailing on cargo ships that crossed the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.

In running for the trustee seat in Area 1 of the SLUSD, Almonte, who had key endorsements from the San Leandro Teachers Association, Centrall Labor Council of Alameda County, DEMOS Democratic Club and San Leandro School Board trustees Stephen Cassidy and Mike Katz, stressed on the need for more school safety, quality education for students in San Leandro schools, a strict residency verification process, and a more proactive school board that communicates well with teachers, students, district employees and members of the community.

Specifically, Hermy is advocating for the adoption of a parcel tax that will help preserve and enhance the arts, music and vocational education programs in the schools, the easing of overcrowding in the middle and high schools, raising teachers' salaries so that the district attracts and retains the best educators for its students, and resolving the contentious relationship between the Superinten-

dent and teachers and staff, among others.

Additionally, Almonte is advising that the school board make parents their partners in keeping schools safe. By welcoming parents into the campuses, Hermy believes that their presence can deter gang recruitment, curb student fights and discourage misbehavior.

“I will see that our School Board values and encourages parent participation, respects teachers and staff, and will unite the community in support of our schools,” said the Philippine Merchant Marine College graduate in his website and in campaign materials distributed prior to the elections.

Almonte, a property manager overseeing two properties with over 550 residents for the Bay Area's largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing, is an active parent in the city and school district of San Leandro.

Hermy is president of the English Learner Advisory Committee, E-scrip Coordinator for the United Parents of San Leandro High School, Advisor to the Leo Service Club of San Leandro High School, member of the Lions Club of San Leandro, and a parishioner of Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church.

County-wise, Almonte is a member-at-large of the Alameda County Consumer Affairs Commission.

Hermy and his wife Maria have two kids, Mia and Matthew who have attended San Leandro public schools. (Information obtained from www.almonteforschoolboard.com.)



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