

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain,

Thank you for your recent support of the CPA sub-program allowing former re-education camp internees to resettle in the United States. Since its establishment in 1975, the program has allowed 150,000 prisoners and their families to resettle here successfully. During the past year, however, the Department of State has restricted this program, jeopardizing the possibility of U.S. resettlement for thousands of former prisoners and their families.

One recent problem is particularly onerous. Until as late as April 1995, the spouses, minor children, and unmarried adult children of prisoners were usually granted derivative refugee status. Granting refugee status to family members, especially unmarried adult children, who are vulnerable to persecution, has been, and continues to be, of utmost importance.

In April 1995, the State Department announced that adult children would no longer be allowed to resettle with their parents. This bureaucratic decision has caused extreme anxiety and separation among an already vulnerable group.

Approximately 3,000 unmarried adult children of former prisoners have been stripped from existing cases and denied resettlement since April 1995. Many of these children have remained unmarried to qualify for resettlement together with their parents and siblings. Some families have suffered years of separation, relying on the promised derivative refugee status. These children would suffer from further separation and the persecution they will undoubtedly face in Vietnam, but their parents would once again become the victims. After waiting years for their casework to be processed and relying on refuge for the entire family, these former prisoners are being asked to leave their children behind to an uncertain fate. Furthermore, these former prisoners need their adult children to help them resettle successfully; they are older and some are not in good health, their children would help make their resettlement economically, as well as emotionally, viable.

Please press the Administration to reconsider and allow the resettlement of these children and to adhere to original policy guidelines in processing future cases involving unmarried adult children of prisoners.

Thank you for your continued interest in the plight of these and all Indochinese refugees.

Sincerely,

Lionel A. Rosenblatt
President