



# HỘI GIA ĐÌNH TÙ NHÂN CHÍNH TRỊ VIỆT NAM

## FAMILIES OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION

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### PROBLEMS FACING FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

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Our frequent contacts with former Vietnamese political prisoners who have resettled in the United States since earlier this year has allowed us, at the Federation of Associations of Former Political Prisoners of Communist Vietnam and the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, to compile a number of common problems facing these former detainees. These problems are briefly summarized below along with proposed remedies/solutions.

#### OBSERVATIONS/PROBLEMS

1. There are little or no opportunities for training, thereby leading to poor prospects to securing a job. The former detainee's age and refugee status are additional handicaps;
2. Slow process in getting assistance for food stamps, Medicaid and housing. Assistance for medical care is especially important for those who came as immigrants since their families cannot afford the extra insurance fees;
3. Feelings of isolation and unworthiness caused by idle time and great difficulties in adjusting to a new environment/culture. These feelings cause strains within their immediate families.

#### REMEDIES/SOLUTIONS

- Give priority to training and skill refreshers (technical/vocational and/or co-op programs);
- Provide subsidies to companies willing to provide on-the-job training to the former detainees.
- Expedite the process of providing subsidies;
- Give priority for low-cost housing to the families of the former detainees.
- Allow relocation of those without family ties in the United States to be close to their friends;
- Curtail discourteous treatment of former detainees by social assistance workers.

January 17, 1991

Sacramento, November 1, 1990

Dear Mrs. Tho,

First of all, I would like to introduce myself as the wife of a former Lieutenant Colonel and also a political prisoner. My family has arrived and been resettled in the U.S. since April 25, 1990 under HO1 list. Subsequently, I would like also to bring up to your attention the following matter so that you might be able to help us to overcome our distress situation.

Dear Mrs. Tho, while my husband served his re-education term at Son La, then Vinh Phu (Ha Noi), he got serious stomach illness. At 9:00 p.m. on October 9, 1990, suddenly he got internal bleeding, he vomitted with a lot of blood and felt unconscious. Our family was very frightening and called our American neighbors for assistance in getting an ambulance. After receiving the first aid from the medics, he was sent to the hospital. He stayed there for four days. He received further treatment after that when he returned home. A week later, subsequently we received a bill of \$500.00 for the ambulance service and another bill of \$9,000 from the hospital (excluding the doctors services).

These two invoices are beyond our ability to pay. We are a newly arrived refugee family. Both my husband and I are 62 years old. Our child petitioned for family reunification. We came here with immigrant visas instead of through the refugee program as former political prisoner. We are not eligible for medicaid, food stamps and other services. My son, who filed the petition, is married and has a wife with two children. His hourly pay rate is \$6.00, therefore, he could hardly take care of two of us, especially in this particular circumstance. We appeal to you and to your association for help in this very distressing situation.

We appreciate your prompt attention.

Sincerely Yours,

Phan Thi Quy  
8213 Palmerson Ave.  
Sacramento, CA 95842

5. We would like to request that the Department call on the support of other governments to join in pressing for the release of the political prisoners before "Tet" (February 15, 1991).
  
6. What is the quota that has been established for detainees arriving in 1991 and 1992?