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Shaughn Butts, The Journal

Evelyn Encila at long last has a happy smile after winning the right to stay in Canada and apply for citizenship

## Filipina nanny waiting for her kids after long fight to stay in Canada

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After a five-year battle with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Evelyn Encila became a permanent resident of Canada this week.

The former nanny from the Philippines made national headlines two years ago. She fought off efforts to deport her when her eldest daughter, Maria Victoria, was deemed mentally retarded by immigration officials in Manila.

After Encila's lawyer presented independent evidence in Federal Court that Maria Victoria was not retarded, Judge Douglas Campbell ordered Immigration to reopen Encila's case and process her immigration application "forthwith."

That was Oct. 11, 1996. On Tuesday, Encila received permission to stay in Canada and apply for citizenship.

"I never lost my faith. I knew I would survive," she said.

But Encila's victory is bittersweet.

*"I never lost my faith. I knew I would survive."*

— Evelyn Encila

Although she will now be able to sponsor her three younger children — Jennifer, Mark Anthony and Cyruss Anthony — to come to Canada, Maria, now 25, won't be joining them. Under immigration regulations, because of her age, she must reapply to come to Canada.

"As a mother, to be honest with you, it breaks my heart. I want my whole family here," said Encila. "But I believe she will come also."

Encila has not seen any of her children since she left the Philippines to work abroad in 1985. Her youngest son was just three. He's now 15. For 11 years, Encila has been sending back money to support her family in the Philippines, while saving enough money to start a new life for them here.

"My house is waiting for my kids every single day. I want to hug them. I

want to give my hug to them."

Encila's lawyer, Shirish Chotalia, said it was "outrageous" that the immigration office in Manila had taken over a year to respond to a federal court order to process Encila's application.

"I have real concerns about the way our immigration offices are operating overseas," said Chotalia, who flew to Manila to meet with officials about the Encila case. "There is an air of arrogance and hostility in the way they treat the Filipino people."

Randy Gurlock, the assistant manager of the Edmonton immigration office, said the Manila immigration office is one of the busiest visa posts in the world.

"It serves a very large part of Asia. I'm just happy Evelyn got landed here, and I don't expect her children to have any problems getting their visas."

Encila hopes her children will arrive next week. "They feel already hopeless, but I say don't lose your hope, don't lose your faith. This is really a good country. I love this country."