

Patterson family pleads with INS to let boys stay

By KARYN HUNT
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SAN FRANCISCO — A San Francisco lawyer appealed to the Immigration and Naturalization Service Wednesday in a last-ditch effort to prevent the government from deporting two Patterson children.

Accompanied by brothers Salvador and Eduardo Morales of Patterson and their six children, attorney Rhoda Wilkinson Domingo asked the INS to grant Eduardo's two children a year's leniency so they will not be deported to Mexico, where she said there is nobody to care for them.

David Ilchert, INS district director, had no immediate decision or comment on the request, Domingo said. Calls to the INS

were not answered Wednesday.

"We are asking them for humanitarian reasons not to deport those children," Domingo said of the Morales children, whose plight has become a cause celebre in Patterson, around Stanislaus County and in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Domingo submitted a stack of petitions, containing more than 1,000 signatures, and about 30 letters supporting the request to let the children stay. She also submitted copies of the youngsters' report cards showing their progress in school.

"I don't see how they (the INS) can say no," Domingo said. "There is no place for those kids

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to go. There are a few relatives in Mexico, but they are old and sick."

Limitations in the 1986 alien-amnesty act have brought about the threat of deportation, according to Domingo. Under that law, Salvador Morales, 32, his brother, Eduardo, 26, and their wives can become legal citizens because they have been in the United States since before the deadline to qualify for amnesty.

But their children did not arrive until 1989, too late to become legal citizens under that law. And the parents cannot go back to Mexico to care for their children because they will risk their chance at U.S. citizenship if they do, Domingo said.

Salvador's wife, Blandina, 34,

is expecting a fifth child any day now. That baby will be a legal citizen because he or she will have been born in the United States.

Eduardo's sons, Eduardo Jr., 6, and Norberto, 3, could be deported May 20 if Ilchert does not grant them a stay, Domingo said. Salvador's four children, Leticia, 12, Gloria, 10, Christina, 6, and Salvador, 5, can stay indefinitely because they have a court-ordered continuance, she explained.

Legislation now being considered by a U.S. Senate committee could help. The bill, by Rep. Bruce Morrison, D-Conn., would extend citizenship to immediate relatives of immigrants who are granted amnesty, provided that the relatives arrived in the United States before Jan. 1, 1990.

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