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Sent: Friday, March 02, 2007 9:54 AM

To: OSComments

Subject: DHS No. USCIS-2006-0044

Director Regulatory Management Division U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration
Services
Department of Homeland Security
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Director U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services,

On behalf of my agency, Wooden Ship Productions which represents foreign traditional artists from the British Isles, Ireland and Canada who perform for non-profit organizations involved in the preservation of traditional culture. I submit these comments in response to the proposed rule published in 72 Fed. Reg. 4888-4915 (February 1, 2007) to adjust the immigration and naturalization benefit application and petition fee schedule.

I am opposed to the proposed increase of the filing fees for nonimmigrant worker petitions. The proposed increase in the Form I-129 and Form I-824 filing fees will be financially burdensome to my to my artists and the nonprofit performing arts organization they perform for. Before the USCIS contemplates any price increase, regular processing procedures must be improved.

USCIS should not consider a fee increase without first improving regular processing procedures in the following ways:

Reduce the maximum processing period for O and P petitions to 30 days. Receipt notices from USCIS often indicate that processing periods will range anywhere between 30 and 120 days. This time span is simply too ambiguous and lengthy to accommodate booking and presenting foreign guest artists for performances with a fixed date. To engage foreign guest artists, and more freely facilitate international cultural exchange, the nonprofit performing arts community must be able to rely upon a 30-day maximum processing period.

Improve the reliability and consistency in adjudication of O and P petitions. Current USCIS policies and practices result in inefficient processing of O and P visas - causing delay, expense, and unwarranted requests for further evidence. USCIS must implement uniform policies, procedures, and training for efficient processing of petitions.

Implement uniform policies to improve the traditional expedite service. The USCIS has made traditional expedite processing

available at no additional fee to petitioners who experience an unforeseen emergency. Since implementing the Premium Process Service, the USCIS has allowed nonprofit organizations to remain eligible for the traditional expedite. This needs to also cover the agents who work for the artists and the non-profits and are the ones who apply for visas for these artists to cover a year which helps everyone involved. Other wise each non profit would need to apply for a visa for each concert which would cause a huge pile up at the Service Centers and a huge financial outlay for everyone. However, the standards for granting expedited processing requests are unclear. The traditional expedite is not helpful unless there are clear, uniform policies appropriately followed and administered by USCIS.

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on this proposed fee increase. We oppose the proposed fee increase and urge the USCIS to demonstrably improve processing of regular petitions before burdening petitioners with any increase in processing fees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Robyn Boyd
Agent - President
Wooden Ship Productions
3 Library Place
Chatham, NY 12037

cc:
Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Hillary Clinton
Representative Kirsten Gillibrand