

March 15, 2007

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

RE: DHS Docket No. USCIS-2006-0044

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to the DHS Docket No. USCIS-2206-0044, regarding the proposed USCIS fee increases. As a volunteer with a non-profit legal aid clinic for immigrants, refugees, and asylees I must protest the current proposal of the USCIS' fee increases. While it is reasonable for INS to increase fees in order to provide better services and in tandem with the natural rise of general operating costs, it is my belief that the proposed increases are draconian measures. The proposed exorbitant fee increases would deter immigrants from applying for legal status, particularly those applying for residency, and citizenship. It is my fear that if the fee increases stayed at the proposed levels, the result would only worsen our current immigration situation.

Fee increases are a natural process for any organization as costs rise and services change, but there must be a *reasonable* increase in fees. Numerous congressmen and congresswomen have spoken out against the current fee increases as proposed for these reasons. There are only so many roads available for immigrants to attain legal status, and those channels must remain open. The proposed increases would be an unjust penalty to poor immigrants and immigrant families. The immigrants that work hard, work towards legal immigration status, and are upstanding members of our communities should be rewarded. We are the country of the American Dream, we are a country of immigrants. Blocking people from pathways to legal immigration status only puts our country in jeopardy as it increases the already large number of undocumented immigrants in the United States, that are resigned to stay in the shadows of our society. It would be unjust to block even more hard working, immigrants of good moral character from achieving the American Dream. It will provide no help to our country, nor our national security, nor the well-being of so many hardworking immigrants in our communities.

While I condone a reasonable increase in immigration fees, I deplore the fee increase as currently proposed, for legal pathways to residency and citizenship must remain open.

Sincerely,

*Shelly M. Lyser*  
Shelly M. Lyser

Refugee Rights Advocate, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant