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Sent: Monday, February 26, 2007 6:37 PM
To: OSComments
Cc: 'Gepsie M. Metellus'
Subject: DHS Docket Number: USCIS-2006-0044

February 26, 2007

Director, Regulatory Management Division, USCIS
Department of Homeland Security
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20529

DHS Docket Number: USCIS-2006-0044

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of community-based organizations serving Haitian and Haitian Americans living in Miami-Dade County, I am writing to express our serious concerns over the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recent announcement that filing fees for the most frequently filed petitions and applications may increase by an average of 66%. What that means in actual terms is that the application for citizenship will jump from \$400 to \$595, the application for permanent residence will increase from \$325 to \$905 and the petition for a relative (I-130) will increase from \$190 to \$335.

I must respectfully state that such a decision is elitist, undemocratic and clearly favors immigrants with the means to pay such steep fees. We work and serve hard working immigrants in the lowest paying occupations in Miami-Dade County. These are men and women who work extremely hard to take care of their families here and in Haiti while holding multiple minimum wage jobs. These are individuals, many of whom are tax-paying US citizens, making unspeakable sacrifices to reunite their families. In a city where the cost of living exceeds the average wage, the proposed fees, some as high as \$905, represent for some, 75% of their monthly income. The impact will be even more deleterious in elderly households where such fees will exceed monthly benefits earned by many elderly retirees, hoping to become US citizens.

Again, let me express our strong opposition to the proposed fee hike which is arbitrary, unconscionable and tantamount to price gouging by an agency with complete and total monopoly over the process. It reinforces the strongly held belief in our community that our work ethic and our reputation as hard and dependable workers will never be rewarded. I strongly urge the USCIS to offer user fees which remain reasonable, accessible to all hard working immigrants wishing to become citizens and equitable to US citizens wishing to be reunited with family members. I thank you for your consideration in this matter.

With Warm Regards,

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