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From: periodpiece@hotmail.com [<mailto:periodpiece@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, February 16, 2007 2:48 PM

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,

I am a performing artist - a classical singer and actor - who recently did a recital tour with instrumentalists from Sicily's Teatro Massimo di Palermo, in a joint production with California's Monterey Italian Heritage Foundation and Italy's 500g.

On behalf of arts presenters like the Italian Heritage group and 500g, and the thousands of audience members we touched, 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 non-immigrant worker petitions. The proposed increase in the Form I-129 and Form I-824 filing fees will be financially burdensome to smaller nonprofit performing arts organizations like the Heritage Foundation. Before the USCIS contemplates any price increase, regular processing procedures must be improved.

USCIS should first improving regular processing procedures in the following ways:

Reduce the maximum processing period for O and P petitions to 30 days. Current USCIS processing periods range anywhere from 30 to 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 say nothing of arranging international travel and housing. 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. If the artists are delayed, not only do they lose, but so do our communities who would be enriched by them, artistically and financially.

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. However, the standards for granting expedited processing requests are unclear. There must be clear, uniform policies appropriately followed and administered by USCIS.

Sharing art and music, whether between communities or countries, is an essential human experience. 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,  
Teressa Byrne  
Performer

117-A Palomar Ave.  
Shell Beach, CA 93449

cc:  
Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Senator Barbara Boxer  
Representative Lois Capps