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**From:** Andrea Plaza [mailto:[andrea@southwestcreations.com](mailto:andrea@southwestcreations.com)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 01, 2007 12:03 PM  
**To:** OSComments  
**Subject:** RE: DHS Docket # USCIS-2006-0044

To Whom it May Concern:

I write to strongly oppose the increase of immigration and naturalization fees that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) proposed on February 1, 2007. Every day immigrants and refugees already struggle to pay immigration fees. The steep increases proposed by USCIS would make it much more difficult to gain permanent resident status, reunite with family members, and become a U.S. citizen. USCIS should be helping immigrants become citizens, not making it harder.

I work with many women from Mexico who have been patiently waiting to formalize their status as citizens in this country. Over the years these women have contributed to our local economy, grown as community leaders and have become strong forces at home. They have earned the right to become citizens; however, with the proposed increase in fees they may have to postpone or even cancel their applications beyond the standard waiting period because they will not be able to afford the proposed increased fees.

USCIS claims that the fee increase is necessary to improve service, and USCIS definitely needs to improve service. While I applaud USCIS's efforts to improve service, I do not think that the entire cost should rest on immigrants who are already paying taxes, working hard, and struggling to pay high fees while receiving poor service.

Immigration and citizenship are public goods that benefit our entire country and that we as a nation should help pay for. Immigrants work hard, pay taxes, and help revitalize our communities. In becoming citizens, immigrants demonstrate their strong commitment to their new home country by learning English, gaining knowledge about American history and government, and swearing allegiance to the United States. We should be encouraging immigrants to become part of our community by gaining legal status and becoming citizens, not setting up barriers that block their path and keep them out.

For all these reasons, I strongly oppose the proposed fee increases and urge USCIS to reconsider this proposal, and to seek other sources of funding for its operations, rather than add more burdens on immigrants. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Andrea Plaza  
Albuquerque, NM