

From: Rocio Manriquez [mailto:manriquez@goldenapple.org]
Sent: Monday, April 02, 2007 12:34 PM
To: OSComments
Subject: Citizenship fees

April 2, 2007

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

RE: DHS Docket # USCIS-2006-0044
Proposed rule – Adjustment of the Immigration and Naturalization Benefit
Application and Petition Fee Schedule

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 have been in the U.S. since I was two years old. I am now 34 and I love my country but when injustice tries to prevail it is something that I am very ashamed of. The U.S. is not liked by so many countries because of the injustices it does to its own people and trying to raise the fees is right up there! Raising fees to such a high amount just shows that you want to eliminate all those that can not afford it. People from low incomes shouldnt have to sacrafice food, shelter, medications in order to apply for citizenship. The fee is already high and to raise it even higher is just ridiculous. Talk about not wanting to include those that can not afford it. Then we wonder why so many countries hate the U.S.

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,

Rocio Manriquez