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

Dear Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service:

I oppose the proposed increases in USCIS service fees. As a person who has been involved in resettlement of several refugee families--from Southeast Asia and from the Balkan states--I am alarmed at the added burden these increases would wreak upon a vulnerable group of people who are already struggling to become established in the USA as their new homeland.

I am proud to say that the families we have worked with--most of whom had braved land mines, rape, or other violence and arrived here with almost no money or possessions--have all found employment, pay taxes, seek educational opportunities and contribute to our US culture and economy. Some are now or will soon be naturalized citizens. Our country is richer for it.

The proposed increases will be economically infeasible for immigrants with low incomes. The proposed adjustment of status application fee (\$1,370), for instance, would take an entire month's pay at minimum-wage! If these increases take effect, many will not be able to afford to adjust their status, apply for work permits, or reunify their families, and could face deportation or elongated detention. I especially oppose all fee increases that would jeopardize family reunification, noting particularly I-129F, I-130, I-600/A, and I-187.

I urge the Congress to provide adequate funding for the important work of the USCIS without relying on fees levied against the people whom it serves. Fee increases such as the ones proposed constitutes another regressive means of taxation of the people least able to foot the bill for public services. What should happen instead is to scale back fees in proportion to the financial resources of the immigrant persons being served.

Please do not institute the proposed fee increases.

Sincerely,

Donald Freeman  
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Rev. Dr.

