

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.

My parents brought my brother and me to this country to give us a better opportunity we would never have in our country, Peru. Through many years I saw my parents' work 2 and sometimes 3 jobs to put food on the table and give my brother and me the best they could. And now my brothers and I are 2 professionals in our community and contribute as responsible and good citizens. Now it's my parents turn to something for them. They need to apply for their citizenship and take advantage from the benefits a citizen of the United States receives, such as the right to vote. But with this outrageous proposal of higher rates, how can they take advantage of this? They worked in low paying jobs that did not offer pension and retirement plans or a chance to save for such a great expense as this. Please consider my story and don't vote for the increase as many of us can't afford it.

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,
Rossana E. Villagra