



1818 South Paulina  
Chicago, Illinois 60608  
Tel. 312.666.1323  
Fax. 312.942.1123

March 15, 2007

Director  
Regulatory Management Division  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Washington D.C. 20529

Director Gonzalez,

We are upset and concerned by your recent announcement of the proposed fee increases for USCIS services. The proposed fee increases will create further obstacles for those working to attain U.S. citizenship. Therefore, we oppose the proposed fee increases and hope that you will look to other options available to you to alleviate the financial burden on hardworking families and individuals in our community.

The Resurrection Project is made up of fourteen member parishes that represent over 5,000 families in the neighborhoods of Pilsen, Little Village and Back of the Yards in Chicago. Many of the families we represent are working very hard just to subsist and support their families with low-wage jobs. The proposed fee increase would prevent many of them from reaching their dreams of achieving lawful residency, family reunification and U.S. citizenship.

We believe that with the proposed fee increase plan we will not see the decrease in processing time that you speak of. We also believe the fee increase punishes eligible "consumers" for attempting to access further legal stability here in the United States. What other business can they go to in order to legally change their status in the United States?

We agree that USCIS does need additional funds to improve services. Processing time on applications should go down. New technology is needed. But this money should not come only from the pockets of individuals and families working hard and struggling to stay above the poverty line. Instead, we ask that you seek financial support from Congress. I was able to listen in on the conference call held on Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, where you stated that it is not your place to request money from Congress even though they recognize the financial struggles of USCIS. You stated that the last time a request was made was a year ago. However, this year there is a newly elected congress and we as an organization are willing to go with you ask for funding.

As an organization that participates in outreach and education around citizenship issues, we frequently speak with community members who cannot apply due to application fees. If this is an issue for our community members now, how many more families will not be able to apply when fees increase to over \$600.00?

The Resurrection Project opposes these suggested fee increases and we as an organization ask that you seek alternatives and compromise to improve funding for USCIS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Franky Stebbins

The Resurrection Project