

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the news that the naturalization fee is most likely going to have an increase on June 1st of this year. I am stunned that the planned fee increase is going to be 80% for adult applications. In 1995, when I first became interested in assisting individuals in their study of citizenship, the fee was \$85. This included the fingerprint fee, as they were able to have them done locally for no cost. To think that the total amount is going to be \$675 is simply outrageous. Even the price of gasoline hasn't risen at this great a rate!

Completing the process of citizenship is one way that an immigrant to the United States can signify their commitment to this country. Many struggle paying the current total fee of \$400, and I would imagine that to increase it by 80% will make it only a dream for many. I fear that the new fee will make this process out of reach for at least many of those in our programs, creating a gulf between those who can afford it and those who cannot – this was not what our founding fathers would have wanted. Many individuals are already at the low income levels despite having two jobs, and it would be a shame to make citizenship one of those things that they cannot obtain because of income. Citizenship should be available because they have learned the language and studied the history and background of the country – it should not be obtainable only by “wealthy” immigrants. The income divide is already present in so many of the lives of our immigrants and I sincerely hope that we don't make citizenship one more thing that cannot be obtained.

Sincerely,

Jane Rockwell
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