

From: mail.relay@mailmanager.net [mailto:mail.relay@mailmanager.net] **On Behalf Of** Thomas Linney
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2007 5:48 PM
To: USCIS Comments
Subject: DHS Docket No. USCIS-2006-0044 - USCIS Fee Increase Comment

Thomas Linney
7415 Park Terrace Drive
Alexandria, VA 22307-2040

March 9, 2007

USCIS Comments

Dear USCIS Comments:

I am writing to you as an international educator, and parent of 2 children adopted internationally to ask for your support and to express my in opposition to the February 1, 2007, proposed rule "Adjustment of the Immigration and Naturalization Benefit Application and Petition Fee Schedule".

The proposed fee increases are exorbitant. They will act as a disincentive for international students and scholars to study and work in the United States. They will act as a disincentive for international adoptions. They will make it more difficult to attract the most competitive workers to work for US business. USCIS must reconsider the role of appropriated funds to meet the administrative needs of the agency. This agency has done nothing but raise fees inside the US and overseas, since 2001. If these services are important to the US, they should be paid for by US citizens, not by visitors, future citizens or children being adopted. I ask that fees be reduced to the actual cost of processing the application or petition under consideration.

International students and scholars, and campus offices that employ them, file tens of thousands of petitions and applications with USCIS annually. US Business do so as well. US agencies and prospective parents also file such papers. None of these group have deep pockets, or reasons to be taxed extra for using US government agencies and services.

Many colleges and universities pay the USCIS fees for the green card process for the person being hired. It is less common for the fees for the family members, such as spouse and children, to be paid for by the colleges or universities. The increases in fees will have a severe impact on families.

Apart from the direct impact of the excessive fees, they are contrary to clearly expressed U.S. policies. The President, the Secretary of State, and indeed the Secretary of Homeland Security have expressed clearly and often the high value that the United States places on attracting international students and scholars to this country. The United States

reaps immeasurable benefits for our foreign policy, our students' education, our economy, our competitiveness, and our public diplomacy from attracting the best and brightest minds and the next generation of world leaders to America's educational institutions.

I believe the increased fees will only reinforce the inefficiencies and USCIS inherited from INS when the Department of Homeland Security was created. The solution to correcting the systemic problems that plague the agency is not to keep raising fees in a futile attempt to finance a twenty-first century agency. A modern set of data collection tools may be necessary, but should not be built on fees charged to visitors and guests coming to the US. Unfortunately, to meet its statutory requirements, USCIS is turning to its only steady source of funding, its filers and petitioners, to finance the required modernization of its systems. While that is understandable, it is not acceptable as a matter of public policy, because it prices statutory benefits out of the reach of those who need them.

While I understand that USCIS is permitted by law to recover the full cost of its services through fees, and indeed has no other option so long as Congress is unwilling to appropriate funds for the operation of the agency, I ask that the fees be reduced to the actual cost of processing the application or petition. Meanwhile, I ask Congress to step up to its responsibility for fixing the untenable situation that drives these fee increases.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Linney
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