

From: mail.relay@mailmanager.net [mailto:mail.relay@mailmanager.net] **On Behalf Of** Jill Averil Keen
Sent: Thursday, March 29, 2007 7:51 PM
To: Emilio Gonzalez
Subject: Don't raise the cost of citizenship! Docket# USCIS-2006-0044

Jill Averil Keen
1271 Minnehaha Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55104-1407

March 29, 2007

Emilio Gonzalez
USCIS Director

Dear Emilio Gonzalez:

One of the pleasures of working in downtown St. Paul is walking through the skyway of 180 E. 5th St. on the days when new citizens are sworn in. From toddlers who are more interested in where to find the ice cream cones to proud grandparents and friends with cameras, the crowd shows off some of the best of our country. Once upon a time (in NJ), my grandfather was one of those toddlers. I would be sad to see fewer days and smaller crowds because immigrants could no longer afford to become citizens. We should be welcoming those who accept the responsibilities of citizenship, not hindering them.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services plans to raise the costs of applying for American citizenship beyond the reach of many recent immigrants.

During the past 12 years, the application costs have risen 400 percent. USCIS has proposed raising the cost of a green card from \$325 to \$905, a citizenship application from \$330 to \$595 and fingerprinting from \$70 to \$80.

USCIS is one of the few government agencies that operates primarily on user fees, yet it plans to put an additional burden on people already working as hard as possible to become lawful U.S. citizens. Naturalization for a family of four would rise to \$2,430.

Congress should appropriate the funds necessary to allow thousands of hard-working immigrants to gain citizenship at a cost they can afford and USCIS should absolutely not enact these dramatic increases.

Sincerely,

Jill Averil Keen
651-644-9728

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