

-----Original Message-----

From: sldowning@yahoo.com [<mailto:sldowning@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2007 11:52 AM

To: OSComments

Subject: DHS No. USCIS-2006-0044

Director Regulatory Management Division U.S. Citizenship and  
Immigration  
Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 3rd Floor  
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Director U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services,

This is a response to the proposed rule published in 72 Fed.  
Reg. 4888-4915 (February 1, 2007) to adjust the immigration and  
naturalization benefit application and petition fee schedule.

I am opposed to the proposed increase of the filing fees for  
nonimmigrant worker petitions. The proposed increase in the Form  
I-129 and Form I-824 filing fees will be financially burdensome  
to my nonprofit performing arts organization. Before the USCIS  
contemplates any price increase, regular processing procedures  
must be improved.

USCIS should not consider a fee increase without first improving  
regular processing procedures in the following ways:

Reduce the maximum processing period for O and P petitions to 30  
days. Receipt notices from USCIS often indicate that processing  
periods will range anywhere between 30 and 120 days. This time  
span is simply too ambiguous and lengthy to accommodate booking  
and presenting foreign guest artists for performances with a  
fixed date. To engage foreign guest artists, and more freely  
facilitate international cultural exchange, the nonprofit  
performing arts community must be able to rely upon a 30-day  
maximum processing period.

Improve the reliability and consistency in adjudication of O and  
P petitions. Current USCIS policies and practices result in  
inefficient processing of O and P visas - causing delay,  
expense, and unwarranted requests for further evidence. USCIS  
must implement uniform policies, procedures, and training for  
efficient processing of petitions.

Implement uniform policies to improve the traditional expedite  
service. The USCIS has made traditional expedite processing  
available at no additional fee to petitioners who experience an  
unforeseen emergency. Since implementing the Premium Process  
Service, the USCIS has allowed nonprofit organizations to remain  
eligible for the traditional expedite. However, the standards  
for granting expedited processing requests are unclear. The

traditional expedite is not helpful unless there are clear, uniform policies appropriately followed and administered by USCIS.

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on this proposed fee increase. We oppose the proposed fee increase and urge the USCIS to demonstrably improve processing of regular petitions before burdening petitioners with any increase in processing fees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sonja Downing  
Ph.D. Candidate, UCSB

785 Camino Del Sur  
Goleta, CA 93117

cc:  
Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Senator Barbara Boxer  
Representative Lois Capps