

March 5, 2007

Dr. Emilio T Gonzalez
Director, Regulatory Management Division
United States Citizenship & Immigration Services
Department of Homeland Security
111 Massachusetts Avenue NW, 3rd Floor
Washington DC 20529

RE: Proposed Fee Increase (Docket No. USCIS – 2006-0044)

Dear Dr. Gonzalez:

We, at Filipinos for Affirmative Action, want to register our strongest objection to your proposed fee increases. Proposing this fee hike on the heels of a proposal to change the citizenship test, legislation to escalate border security and simultaneous ICE raids on different workplaces across the nation sends a very negative signal to the immigrant community. It appears like orchestrated and deliberate steps at creating legal, physical, military, sheer paper and now monetary walls to the eventual integration of immigrants to the community.

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This is not evidence of good stewardship and fairness on the part of the government. Immigrants are already expected to pay taxes for at least five years without eligibility to essential services, now applicants for CIS services will be expected to pay 100% of the cost of applying for citizenship, as well as shoulder part of the cost for non-paying applicants, while farmers get subsidies, congress approves pork barrel projects and more money is spent on armaments and war in the Middle East. Since naturalization would redound to the common good of the nation, the government should subsidize this service in the same way it subsidizes other more powerful interests in the country.

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A proposed fee-hike of 66% (on the average) is unjust and insensitive, especially as compared to the more modest proposed increase in service over two years of only 20%. Clearly the message is that citizenship is available only to those who can afford it. We urge you to look for alternative funding for services that hard working and tax paying immigrants deserve.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Valladares
Newcomer Counselor



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