
From: Susan Reed [mailto:SusanR@GrandRapidsFUMC.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 06, 2007 1:02 PM
To: OSComments
Subject: DHS Docket No. USCIS- 2006-0044

To Whom It May Concern:

As an advocate for low income immigrants, I was frustrated, disappointed, and frightened to learn of the proposed fee increases referenced above. Most of my clients already struggle to pay the fees associated with their applications. Although I appreciate that there are fee waivers available, working families often do not qualify for fee waivers and must sacrifice and borrow in order to maintain their immigration status. Every day I speak with people who have not completed the process of adjusting their status or renewing their I-551 cards because they simply don't have the money and don't qualify for fee waivers. I am helpless to assist them when that is the case.

I understand that CIS, like the U.S. Postal Service, is seeking to cover more of its costs. However, as a taxpayer, I find adjudication of applications for legal immigration status or documents to be a perfectly reasonable use of government resources. Requiring pure fee-for-service payment by immigrants themselves is an abdication of the government's responsibilities. Only the government can provide these services, so an increase of 80% looks like an exploitation of that monopoly power. What would please UPS shareholders more than an 80% increase in USPS fees? I don't want my government to be perceived as taking advantage of immigrants because they can't go elsewhere for their documents -- that's not the welcoming America that I would like our country to be.

In post-9/11 America, it's short-sighted to place registration financially out-of-reach of ordinary, law-abiding immigrants. If we want people to come forward and be counted and identified, we should make it easy and inexpensive, not complicated and cost-prohibitive. If we want immigrants to cooperate with us against terrorists who might be "blending-in" to immigrant communities, we should make sure that citizenship and immigration services for eligible immigrants remain affordable and accessible so that the members of those communities will be willing and able to contribute to and communicate with our larger society.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

s/ Susan E. Reed

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