

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

USCIS increases are excessive and unfair

AFSC's long and direct experience with immigrants and immigrant rights activists across the nation grounds our work and informs our strong opposition to proposed fee increases by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The proposed increases are excessive and will create yet another obstacle for individuals seeking to adjust their immigration status. The proposed fee increases will place too heavy a burden on the backs of immigrants, many of whom cannot shoulder the excessive costs and will be forced to postpone their dreams of becoming U.S. citizens or remain separated from their families.

Two Proposed

Fee Increases

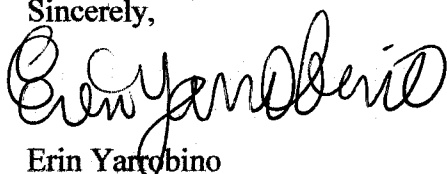
Permanent residency application fee: From \$325 to \$905

Naturalization application fee: From \$330 to \$595

The size of the proposed fee increases is particularly troubling since the Bush administration has indicated that it wants to help immigrants become U.S. citizens. For example, the current fee to apply for permanent residency is \$325; CIS proposes to raise this fee to \$905 (a 178 percent increase). The fee for naturalization ("citizenship") applications would increase from \$330 to \$595 (an 80 percent increase). These exorbitant fees would create undue economic hardship for many applicants and their family members.

In a letter to USCIS Director Emilio T. Gonzalez, AFSC General Secretary Mary Ellen McNish urges the USCIS to work with Congress to create an alternative and permanent funding stream that will support USCIS operations. AFSC also calls on Congressional leaders to fund immigration services and policies that benefit families rather than spend millions of dollars to underwrite policies centered on arrests, detention, and deportation, which cause untold hardships for families and communities.

Sincerely,



Erin Yarbino