

HUEY SHI CHEW
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March 22, 2007

USCIS Comments

Dear USCIS Comments:

I am writing to you as an international educator in opposition to the February 1, 2007, proposed rule "Adjustment of the Immigration and Naturalization Benefit Application and Petition Fee Schedule." The proposed fee increases are so exorbitant they will act as a disincentive for international students and scholars to study and work in the United States. USCIS must reconsider the role of appropriated funds to meet the administrative needs of the agency. I ask that fees be reduced to the actual cost of processing the application or petition.

Apart from the direct impact of the excessive fees, they are contrary to clearly expressed U.S. policies. The President, the Secretary of State, and indeed the Secretary of Homeland Security have expressed clearly and often the high value that the United States places on attracting international students and scholars to this country. The United States reaps immeasurable benefits for our foreign policy, our students' education, our economy, our competitiveness, and our public diplomacy from attracting the best and brightest minds and the next generation of world leaders to America's educational institutions.

As a former international student myself, I can attest that the increased fees will not reflect the sincerity of the US government in welcoming international students and encouraging them to share their expertise and experience here in the US. There is enough paper work that needs to be done and with the increased fees, it probably will kill any enthusiasm on the part of the international students or scholars to file for applications to USCIS.

While I understand that USCIS is permitted by law to recover the full cost of its services through fees, and indeed has no other option so long as Congress is unwilling to appropriate funds for the operation of the agency, I ask that the fees be reduced to the actual cost of processing the application or petition. Meanwhile, I ask Congress to step up to its responsibility for fixing the untenable situation that drives these fee increases.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

HUEY SHI CHEW
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