

As a native-born U.S. citizen who lives and works with immigrants, I am writing to express concern regarding the substantial increase in fees for adjustment of status and application for citizenship. I believe that U.S. residency and citizenship should be valued, and I understand the principle of user-fees; however, I see the current increase as excessive.

The requirement for residency and citizenship should be integrity, not wealth. It is my understanding that the fee for citizenship would increase from \$400 currently (\$250 until 2002) to a proposed \$675, requiring all of 3 weeks' earnings for an immigrant working a minimum-wage job. I am further concerned about the increase proposed for adjustment of status, which I understand to be from \$400 today (including biometrics) to nearly \$1000 (including biometrics), a full month's pay for a minimum-wage worker. I find this unreasonable. I also believe that putting adjustment of status out of the reach of hard-working immigrants is not in the interest of our country's economy or security. While the regulations provide for means-based exceptions, my experience with such exceptions has been that the bar is set unduly high.

These increases are justified based on the need to improve the system. There is no question that the system needs improvements; however, these should come from appropriated funds and not rest on the shoulders of the poor. After a solid system has been set in place, a user fee for ongoing operations (with a sliding scale sensitive to the cost of living of the working poor) would be appropriate.

I join with those requesting that the currently proposed fee increase be revisited.

Respectfully,

Neota Hall