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From: racquetball jones [<mailto:rballjones@yahoo.com>]

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To: OSComments

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Subject: DHS Docket No. USCIS 2006-0044

The proposed application/petition fee increase would place a significant burden on low-income immigrants who seek naturalization.

According to a February, 2007 report from the Migration Policy Institute, 41% of lawful permanent residents who had not naturalized in 2000-01 were "low-income" (below 200% of the poverty level). By contrast, of those who have naturalized recently, only 28% were low-income. In short, there are a significant number of low-income immigrants who could potentially naturalize, and the decision to do so is affected by their ability to pay for the process--which frequently includes attorney fees in addition to the fees set by the USCIS.

Notwithstanding the provision for a fee waiver, the prospect of having to pay significant fees to naturalize are certainly daunting and will likely discourage many from even trying.

Naturalization encourages immigrants to more fully participate in, and contribute to, U.S. society. To discourage this process by hiking fees an average of 66% seems contrary to good public policy.

The USCIS should ask Congress for additional funds or seek alternate ways to fund its operations instead of placing the burden almost entirely on the backs of immigrants.

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