

AN INS FINGERPRINT RULE CAN NO LONGER RULE OUT CITIZENSHIP / SOME PEOPLE HAVE FINGERPRINTS TOO FINE TO BE READ. THAT HAS CAUSED PLENTY OF TROUBLE WITH THE INS.

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Body

This much is clear: Pushp Grover desperately wants to become a U.S. citizen.

Less clear are the tiny whorls and ridges that make up her **fingerprint** patterns.

To the Immigration and Naturalization Service, that has been ground for not granting her **citizenship** for the last year.

The **INS** says it needs the prints for its files. The FBI, which examines the prints, says they are unreadable, despite repeated attempts **in** the past year.

Meanwhile, Grover, 53, who has lived **in** the United States for 27 years, including the last six **in** Everett, Wash., has become increasingly frustrated with the process.

"I passed my test. I passed my interview. I took the oath, and I was told I'd get the **citizenship**, but I didn't get it because of my **fingerprints**," she said. "I've never heard of such a thing."

Grover is a native of India who emigrated from England with her husband, Kumar. She is one of a small fraction of immigrants who the **INS** says are denied **citizenship** because of their **fingerprints**.

The **INS**, however, started a policy last week that will allow those with **fingerprints** deemed unreadable to gain **citizenship** if they **can** prove they have a clean police record for the last five years.

But Grover is skeptical. She said the **INS** told her nothing about it.

And the new policy allows that route only if **people** already have had their **fingerprints** checked and rejected two times and then have been told to get the police check.

She even has appealed for help from the office of Rep. Jack Metcalf (R., Wash.). Metcalf aide Fairalee Markusen became involved **in** Grover's case **in** October and said she, too, has become frustrated with the process.

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Recently, Markusen set up a **fingerprinting** session for Grover at the **INS** office **in** Seattle, requesting that the prints be specially delivered to the FBI **in** Clarksburg, W.Va., where prints of all **citizenship** applicants are sent. They are waiting for a response.

Grover's fingertips, upon close inspection, clearly have prints. The ridges are just very **fine** and, according to the **INS**, have an "insufficient pattern area."

Abnormal **fingerprint** development, which is rare, typically happens early **in** a person's life, said Bellevue, Wash., dermatologist Julie Francis.

"We have **fingerprints** due to the development of our sweat glands **in** our fingerpads early **in** life. If someone has abnormal sweat glands, which **can** occur, they might not have clear **fingerprints**," Francis said.

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