



# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NCLR EXPRESSES STRONG CONCERN WITH THE FEE INCREASE FOR IMMIGRATION SERVICES

**Washington, DC** – The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., today expressed serious concern with the new, significant fee increases for dozens of immigration applications announced by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Fees for applications will increase an average of 66% with some application fees increasing much more. For example, the naturalization application will now be \$595, up from \$95 in 1998.

“It is hard to justify this new fee increase,” stated Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO. “We have already seen from past fee increases that they come with no guarantee of better service. People should not be forced to pay a lot more money for poor customer service, lost files, and long backlogs.”

USCIS Director Emilio González has called the fee increases a “business decision,” stating that additional fees are needed to cover the agency’s costs. “If USCIS wants to use a business model to justify increased fees, it must also act like a business and provide the customer service that people pay for,” stated Murguía. “It’s not as though people can shop around in search of a better bargain.”

“In his State of the Union address last week the President stated that we had to do more to integrate immigrants into American society, yet we continue to make the cornerstone of that integration – citizenship – more difficult and more expensive. Once again, actions have to match rhetoric if President Bush sincerely wants to make his vision a reality,” stated Murguía.

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