

SANTA FE COUNTY

Resolution No. 2007 - 45

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS) FEE INCREASE

WHEREAS, our nation's and county newcomers are making valuable contributions to the social, cultural, and economic life of the United States of America and Santa Fe County; and

WHEREAS, Santa Fe County is home to many hardworking, tax-paying, legal permanent residents who are eager to become Americans by pursuing the dream of United States citizenship; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2007, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced a proposal that would raise the fees for starting the naturalization process from \$400 to \$675, an increase of 69%; and

WHEREAS, the USCIS anticipates that the fee hike will go into effect in June; and

WHEREAS, naturalization fees have been soaring since 1991, when legal permanent residents paid \$90 to apply for U.S. citizenship; and

WHEREAS, naturalization fee increases result from our nation's fundamentally flawed system of financing immigration services, which requires the USCIS to rely almost exclusively on application fees to fund the delivery of services to immigrants; and

WHEREAS, the USCIS believes that it needs this massive fee hike to pay for major infrastructure investments and process enhancements, such as improvements in the timeliness of background checks, modernization of its outdated business systems through technology upgrades, facilities improvements and enhancements in its personnel training and recruitment programs; and

WHEREAS, the proposed fee increase would place a nearly insurmountable barrier in the path of legal permanent residents who seek to naturalize, many of whom have limited financial resources; and

WHEREAS, we believe that our system for funding immigration services should be a partnership between newcomers and the federal government where applicants pay a reasonable fee for quality service; and

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WHEREAS, we believe that our system for funding immigration services should be a partnership between newcomers and the federal government where applicants pay a reasonable fee for quality service; and

WHEREAS, the USCIS' proposed fee increase is contrary to the spirit of our nation's and county's tradition of welcoming and integrating immigrants, and sends legal permanent residents the wrong message at a time when they are seeking to embrace U.S. citizenship; and

WHEREAS, naturalization benefits Santa Fe County by helping to ensure that newcomers become full participants in our nation's civic life; and

WHEREAS, the full participation of newcomers enriches and maintains the vitality of our democracy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY SANTA FE COUNTY that:

We oppose the proposed fee increase by USCIS and demand a halt to the fee increase for all naturalization applications;

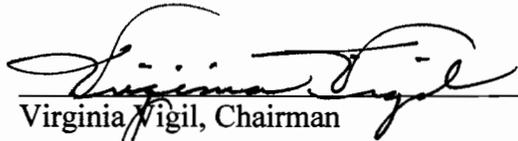
We call on the Director of the USCIS to immediately provide President George W. Bush and the U.S. Congress with accurate information to ascertain the amount of federal appropriations that would be needed to enable the USCIS to modernize its operations, and enhance its naturalization services, without raising the naturalization fee;

We call on President George W. Bush and the U.S. Congress to address the fundamental problems in our nation's system for financing immigration services by providing appropriations to supplement fee revenue to cover costs of major USCIS expenses such as infrastructure investments, process enhancements and capital improvements;

The County Clerk is directed to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Director of the USCIS, the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate for inclusion in the Congressional Record.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 13th DAY OF MARCH, 2007.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

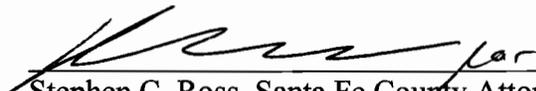

Virginia Vigil, Chairman

ATTEST:


Valerie Espinoza, Santa Fe County Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM:

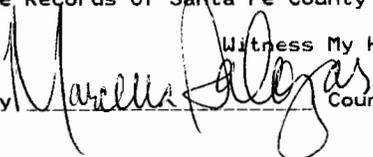

Stephen C. Ross, Santa Fe County Attorney



COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

BCC RESOLUTIONS
PAGES: 3

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 14TH Day Of March, A.D., 2007 at 09:01
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # **1474465**
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Deputy  Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Valerie Espinoza
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM