

Dr. Emilio Gonzalez  
Director, US Citizenship and Immigration Services  
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20536

Dear Dr. Gonzalez:

### **Building Walls Instead of Bridges:**

As Congress authorizes building a wall on the US border with Mexico, the undersigned organizations are deeply concerned that USCIS is also building a wall— a wall that will block many legal immigrants from achieving the American Dream of US citizenship. We write to strongly protest the USCIS administrative initiatives that make up the bricks in this wall. Together they appear to us a clear strategy pursued through administrative fiat to make the dream of American Citizenship unattainable for many lower-income, less-educated immigrants – immigrants who can currently become citizens and who make fine Americans.

### **Increased Fees – A Cost Barrier to Citizenship:**

We strongly oppose USCIS’s current consideration of a further major increase to the naturalization fee. We understand that this fee could increase in 2007 to as much as \$800, double the current total cost of \$400.

In 1998, the cost to apply for citizenship was \$95. In 2002, after the Bush Administration took office, the costs (including fingerprinting fees) went up from \$250 to \$310. The total fees are now \$400, a fourfold increase in the past eight years. In 2004, USCIS even began increasing fees automatically each year to account for inflation.

You have publicly stated your position that US citizenship is “priceless,” and that immigrants would be willing to pay whatever the cost. But our experience is that many low-income immigrants, and particularly immigrant families with multiple members who are eligible to naturalize, already have great difficulty paying for their applications, and already put off applying until they can afford the cost. A further major increase will only further put citizenship out of reach for thousands of immigrants who would love to become Americans.

### **Electronic Pre-Applications – A Digital Barrier to Citizenship:**

We also strongly oppose the USCIS proposal to make filing of citizenship and other applications solely electronic. This new proposal, quietly published in the Federal Register in December 2005 and projected to take effect later this year, would require anyone filing an immigration

application to submit a 19-page form to set up an “immigration account” and to pay an additional \$100 fee.

Too many immigrants lack access to computers and online services, and to agencies and law firms with such infrastructure. Making all immigration filings electronic would close off citizenship and other benefits to those immigrants on the under-resourced side of the “digital divide.” During the official 60-day comment period this past winter, several organizations urged USCIS to reconsider this initiative. Unfortunately, USCIS appears intent on still pursuing it.

### **Increased Paperwork – A Bureaucratic Barrier to Citizenship:**

In 2002, the Bush administration increased the N-400 citizenship application from 4 pages to 10 pages. Your electronic filing proposal would add another 19 pages of information that you would ask. Collecting a total of 29 pages of information is a significant bureaucratic barrier to citizenship for immigrants.

These barriers would greatly increase the workload of non-profit agencies and attorneys who assist these immigrants to become U.S. citizens. In particular, e-filing would make it practically unfeasible for such agencies to conduct large naturalization workshops to assist immigrants become citizens, since volunteers would need to complete the 19-page form on top of the 10-page N-400.

### **Changing the Test – A Knowledge Barrier to Citizenship:**

Already immigrants must pass a citizenship test that many native born Americans could not pass. We are also concerned about the ongoing redesign of the naturalization test, currently scheduled to be unveiled in January 2007. This process has been fraught with missteps. A test design contractor was fired. The respected National Academy of Sciences was hired, then fired. Proposals were made that would drastically change the test format and thus make the test much harder for many immigrants who lack formal education. We want to ensure that the redesign will result in a fair test that will not put citizenship out of reach for immigrants who feel strongly attached to the US but have difficulty with tests.

### **Assist Immigrants Become U.S. Citizens – Do Not Deny the Dream of Citizenship:**

Our government should be welcoming hardworking, patriotic immigrants who want to be part of our nation. Democratic inclusion rather than systematic exclusion should be the touchstone of our Democracy. We should not be erecting new barriers to keep these would-be new Americans out of our community, especially through unaccountable administrative action. We strongly urge you not to raise these further barriers, and to instead keep the door to the American Dream open to those who want to pursue it. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

1. Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

### **National organizations**

2. National Immigration Forum
3. Center for Community Change
4. Fair Immigration Reform Movement
5. New Americans Opportunity Campaign
6. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
7. National Council of La Raza
8. Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
9. The Gamaliel Foundation
10. Immigrant Legal Resource Center
11. Guatemala Peace and Development Network
12. Love Sees No Borders
13. National Immigrant Justice Center
14. South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow (SAALT)
15. National Immigrant Solidarity Network
16. Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
17. National Council of Jewish Women
18. U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
19. American Families United
20. International Immigrants Foundation
21. Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
22. Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California

### **Labor organizations**

23. Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
24. UNITE HERE
25. Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
26. United Farm Workers of America
27. International Brotherhood of Teamsters
28. United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
29. Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)
30. Change to Win
31. Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)
32. Farmworker Association of Florida, Apopka FL

### **State/regional organizations**

33. Idaho Community Action Network, Boise ID
34. Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, Seattle WA
35. Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, Nashville TN
36. CAUSA, Salem OR
37. Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition, Boston MA
38. Michigan Organizing Project, Grand Rapids MI
39. Florida Immigrant Coalition, Miami FL
40. New York Immigration Coalition, New York NY
41. National Capital Immigrant Coalition

42. Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
43. Hispanic Coalition, Miami FL
44. Maine LULAC Council 31000, East Portland ME
45. Hate Free Zone, Seattle WA
46. Communities for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, Charlotte NC
47. Voces de la Frontera, Milwaukee WI
48. Kentucky Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform (KCCIR), Lexington KY
49. Justice for Immigrants Coalition of Indiana (JICI), Indianapolis IN
50. Coalition for New South Carolinians, Columbia SC
51. South Texas Immigration Council, Inc, Harlingen TX
52. Pax Christi Maine
53. CASA of Maryland, Inc
54. We Are America/Somos America (AZ)
55. Peace Action Maine
56. Coalition for Latin American Migrants and Immigrants, Philadelphia PA
57. Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC)
58. Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, Lincoln NE
59. State of Oregon Hispanic Commission
60. Minnesota Literacy Council
61. Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Des Moines IA
62. Latinos en Accion de CCI, Des Moines IA

**Faith communities**

63. Diocese of Belleville Office of Hispanic Ministry, Belleville IL
64. Project IRENE, Berwyn IL
65. Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations, Chicago IL
66. Sacred Heart Province JPIC, Countryside IL
67. Asbury United Methodist Church, Camden NJ
68. FaithAction International House, Greensboro, NC
69. Agape Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL
70. Bultasa Buddhist Temple, Chicago IL
71. Hana Korean Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL
72. Hanmee Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL
73. Harvest Korean Presbyterian Church Onnuri Church of Chicago
74. Holy Mountain Evangelical Church, Chicago IL
75. Hosanna Evangelical Church of Chicago, Chicago IL
76. Korean Church Federation of Greater Chicago , Chicago IL
77. Jeonwon Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL
78. Northwest Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL
79. Salvation Army Mayfair Community Church, Chicago IL
80. Halleluiah Church, Chicago IL
81. Mission Methodist Church, Chicago IL
82. Philadelphia Church, Chicago IL
83. New Life Baptist Church, Chicago IL
84. Full Gospel Church of Love, Chicago IL
85. Jesurun Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL

86. Grace Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL
87. Korean Church of Chicago, Chicago IL
88. Korean Presbyterian Church of Chicago, Chicago IL
89. New Life Church of Chicago, Chicago IL
90. Promise and Fulfillment Community Church, Chicago IL
91. Sae Kwhang United Presbyterian Church, Chicago IL
92. Salem Korean United Methodist Church, Chicago IL
93. Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Hispanic Catholics -- Vicariate 1, Libertyville IL
94. Justice & Mercy, Inc. (PA)
95. Lutheran Children and Family Service, Philadelphia PA
96. Seminole United Methodist Church, Seminole FL
97. Dolores Mission Church, Los Angeles CA
98. True Light Korean Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles CA
99. Bethel Korean United Methodist Church, Los Angeles CA
100. Unitarian Universalist Church, Long Beach CA
101. Immigrant Information Center & Christian Church New Life, Boston MA
102. Glenbrook Korean United Methodist Church, Northbrook IL

### **Local organizations**

103. Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, Chicago IL
104. Youth Service Bureau of the Illinois Valley, Ottawa IL
105. Pilsen Neighbors Community Council, Chicago IL
106. Albany Park Neighborhood Council, Chicago IL
107. Brazilian Organization for Social Services of Greater Philadelphia
108. El Centro, Kansas City KS
109. LUCa (Latinos United for Change and Advancement), Madison WI
110. Immigrant Advocacy Center, Perry IA
111. UNIRR (United Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights), Chicago IL
112. Na Loio Immigrant Rights and Public Interest Legal Center, Honolulu, Hawaii
113. Law Office of Emily Love, PC, Evanston IL
114. Centro de Informacion, Elgin IL
115. Arab American Family Services, Palos Hills IL
116. Casa Mexiquense, Waukegan IL
117. Lake County Soccer, Waukegan IL
118. Family Focus Aurora (Illinois)
119. Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago IL
120. [Virginia Justice Center for Farm and Immigrant Workers, Falls Church VA](#)
121. East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center (ECIRMAC), Urbana IL
122. Eirene Immigration Center, Camden NJ
123. Berwyn United Neighborhoods Gay and Lesbian Organization
124. Chicago Irish Immigrant Support, Chicago IL
125. Students United for Immigrant Rights, Racine WI
126. Rock Valley College Refugee and Immigrant Services, Rockford IL
127. Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Chicago IL
128. Haitian Women of Miami, Inc., Miami FL
129. Mujeres Iniciando en las Americas (MIA), Orange County CA

130. Council for the Spanish Speaking, Milwaukee WI
131. Servicio Internacional, Shelbyville TN
132. Jr's Roofing & Framing, Shelbyville TN
133. United African Organization, Chicago IL
134. Korean American Senior Center, Chicago IL
135. Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Chicago IL
136. Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Chicago IL
137. HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia
138. Interfaith Leadership Project of Cicero, Berwyn and Stickney, IL
139. Dominican Literacy Center, Aurora, IL
140. Law Office of John R. Wideikis, Palos Heights IL
141. World Relief DuPage/Aurora (IL)
142. Alivio Medical Center, Chicago IL
143. Albany Park Community Center, Chicago IL
144. Chicago Dry Cleaners Association, Chicago IL
145. Chicago Korean-American Chamber of Commerce, Chicago IL
146. Hanul Family Alliance, Chicago IL
147. Korean American Association of Chicago, Chicago IL
148. Korean American Community Services, Chicago IL
149. Korean American Merchants Association of Chicago, Chicago IL
150. Korean American Nurses Association, Chicago IL
151. Korean American Women in Need, Chicago IL
152. National Association of Asian American Professionals, Chicago Chapter
153. Asian Law Alliance, San Jose CA
154. Dumaraonan USA
155. Korean Community Center of the East Bay, Oakland CA
156. Asian Law Caucus, San Francisco CA
157. Rochester Bill of Right Defense Committee, Rochester NY
158. Immigrant Workers of Wayne County, Ohio
159. Chicagoland Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (CCCLR)
160. ONE Lowell: Building New American Communities, Lowell MA
161. Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, Inc., Philadelphia PA
162. Refugee and Immigration Services of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond VA
163. Refugee & Immigration Services, Roanoke VA
164. International Institute Rhode Island, Providence RI
165. Erie Neighborhood House, Chicago IL
166. Centro Campesino Inc., Owatonna MN
167. Conexion Americas, Nashville TN
168. El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos, Albuquerque NM
169. Jewish Community Action of St. Paul, MN
170. Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee
171. Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, Portland ME
172. Latino Union, Chicago IL
173. Unite for Dignity, Inc., Miami FL
174. Colonias Unidas, Rio Grande City TX
175. The Resurrection Project, Chicago IL

176. Westside Community Action Network Center (Westside CAN Center), Kansas City MO
177. MAAC Project, National City CA
178. Centro Romero, Chicago IL
179. Mujeres Latinas en Acción, Chicago IL
180. Shirlington Employment and Education Center, Arlington VA
181. United Neighborhood Houses of New York, New York NY
182. Latino Organization of the Southwest, Chicago IL
183. Centro de Amistad, Guadalupe AZ
184. Family Counseling Services, Washington, IA
185. Catholic Charities, Santa Clara CA
186. The Irish Immigration & Pastoral Center of Philadelphia
187. Navarre Law Firm LLC, Des Plaines IL
188. Latino Leadership, Inc., Orlando FL
189. The Friends and Neighbors of Immigrants Coalition, Washington IA
190. Center for Intercultural Organizing, Portland OR
191. World Relief Chicago, Chicago IL
192. Korean Americans for Just Immigration Reform (PA)
193. Korean Americans Voters Alliance (WA)
194. Korean Alliance for Peace and Justice (PA)
195. Korean Chamber of Commerce of Orange County (CA)
196. AKAMAC, Los Angeles CA
197. Korean Dry Cleaners - Laundry Association, Los Angeles CA
198. Super Bargain Store, Los Angeles CA
199. Young Koreans United (YKU) of USA
200. Korean Resource Center, Los Angeles CA
201. Korean American Seniors Coalition, Los Angeles CA
202. Young Koreans United of Los Angeles, Los Angeles CA
203. Korean American Association of Greater NY, New York, NY
204. Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY, New York, NY
205. Immigration / ESOL of KCS, Flushing, NY
206. Education Development Institute, Flushing, NY
207. Asian American Adult Center, Flushing, NY
208. Public Health Program of KCS, New York, NY
209. Korean American Senior Center of Corona, Corona NY
210. Korean American Senior Center of Flushing, Flushing NY
211. Community Relations of KCS, Flushing NY
212. Thrift Shop of KCS, Flushing NY
213. Brooklyn Project, Brooklyn NY
214. Rainbow Center, Flushing NY
215. Asian Americans for Community Involvement, San Jose CA
216. United Resistance, Sonoma County CA
217. Grandview Park Presbyterian Church, Kansas City KS
218. Pan Asian Community Alliance, Eugene, OR
219. Centro de Orientacion del Inmigrante (CODI), Miami FL
220. Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues, Chicago IL
221. Asian Americans United, Philadelphia, PA

222. Annunciation House, Inc, El Paso, TX
223. American Friends Service Committee – Des Moines (IA)
224. El Centro, Inc., Raleigh NC
225. Young Koreans United (YKU) of Los Angeles
226. People's Uprising Commemoration Committee, Los Angeles CA
227. Seattle-Washington State Korean Association
228. Korean American Coalition of Orange County (CA)
229. Polish American Association, Chicago IL
230. Hispanos Unidos De America Inc, DeLand FL
231. Korean-American Association of Greater Atlanta
232. Korean American IT Professionals Association

### **Individual signers**

- |                                       |                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Erika Chavez, Chicago IL           | 34. Dorothy Geisler    |
| 2. Rosemary M. Gallagher, Tarboro, NC | 35. Stephanie Gonzalez |
| 3. Pete Cerneka, Lebanon IL           | 36. Sue Griffith       |
| 4. Lucia Munoz, Orange County CA      | 37. Maria Guardado     |
| 5. Chris Hill, Los Angeles CA         | 38. Lisa Hartman       |
| 6. Raul Molina, New York NY           | 39. Gianna Hochstein   |
| 7. Frank Amon                         | 40. Nancy Hofland      |
| 8. Mario Avila                        | 41. Conrad Housley     |
| 9. Hilda Bolden                       | 42. Romeo Kassarjian   |
| 10. Elias Bonilla                     | 43. Ron Keyes          |
| 11. Patrick Bonner                    | 44. Fiona Knox         |
| 12. Blase Bonpane                     | 45. Sandra Kroll       |
| 13. Theresa Bonpane                   | 46. Iona Kusmiak       |
| 14. Diane Boydell                     | 47. Bill Lakin         |
| 15. Rachel Bruhnke                    | 48. Pat Lakin          |
| 16. Docia Buckrucker                  | 49. Edmundo Loweree    |
| 17. Melissa Burch                     | 50. Katherine Loweree  |
| 18. Joe Chaikin                       | 51. Mollie Lowery      |
| 19. Carol Chaikin                     | 52. Sandra Luna        |
| 20. Rev. Monica Cummings              | 53. Angelica Marin     |
| 21. Gehl Davis                        | 54. Francisco Martinez |
| 22. Duane Dillman                     | 55. Pat McCully        |
| 23. Kent Doss                         | 56. Jan Meslin         |
| 24. Paul Dotterer                     | 57. Sally Ann Michel   |
| 25. Jay Edie                          | 58. Judith Neff        |
| 26. Patricia Edie                     | 59. Cosme Noriega      |
| 27. Moises Escalente                  | 60. Eva Noriega        |
| 28. Carlos Escorcía                   | 61. Abe Ohanian        |
| 29. Liliana Estrada                   | 62. Gloria Ohanian     |
| 30. Meghann Farnsworth                | 63. Macedonio Oliva    |
| 31. Bea Foster                        | 64. Frankie Ortega     |
| 32. Alejandro Franco                  | 65. Jose Miguel Ortiz  |
| 33. Michele Garcia-Jurado             | 66. Rychard Powell     |

67. Nora Preciado
68. Isabel Quintero
69. Birdie Reed
70. Charlie Reed
71. Isabel Rodriguez
72. Lee Marie Sanchez
73. Edwarda Schwartzbach
74. Ruth Shapin
75. Ted Shapin
76. Anne Shattuck
77. Nicholas Simon
78. Gary Sjogren
79. Bill Strahan
80. John M Suarez
81. Sheila Suarez
82. Muffe Sunde
83. Agelica Tejada
84. Esther Tejada
85. Felix Tello
86. Helen Thaler
87. Anne Thorpe
88. Dean Thorpe
89. Ellen Trumpler
90. Bill Ungar
91. Ronald Vaught
92. Pat Viso
93. Don W. White
94. Phil Way
95. Rose Yanez
96. Jo Rae Zuckerman
97. Claire McDonough
98. Rev. Paul Brant, SJ, Stovall, NC
99. Lucy Brody
100. Martha N. O'Toole, St. Paul MN
101. Thomas D. Morin
102. Raquel N. Morin
103. Gabriel N. Morin
104. Martha Cedeno
105. Patrick J. Corr, Pittsburgh PA
106. Reina Schmitz, Valinda CA
107. Sister Anna Marie Megel
108. Heather Bae
109. Rosie Lamprea
110. Vaishali Mamgain
111. Marikka Pretz-Anderson, Chicago IL
112. Dr. Laurie Bergner, Normal IL