



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Wes Moore

The Honorable Joseph B. Edlow, Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Department of Homeland Security
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear Director Edlow:

I write to oppose the proposal to raise the naturalization application fee to \$1,330 and eliminate all income-based fee relief. This proposal is not a bureaucratic adjustment. It would put American citizenship out of reach for thousands of lawful permanent residents in Maryland who have already done everything this country asked of them.

Maryland is a state of immigrants. This is not our weakness; this is our strength. They are our neighbors, our colleagues, and 22 percent of our labor force. They work in every sector—from agriculture and construction to healthcare and STEM—driving the innovation that keeps Maryland competitive.

That is why, earlier this year, we launched Citizenship Maryland. This initiative is bringing together partners from the public, non-profit, and private sectors to help eligible Marylanders navigate the path to naturalization. Our partnership is producing progress, but this proposal would roll it back.

The current fee structure for citizenship has existed—in some form under Republican and Democratic administrations alike—and it acknowledges a simple fact: for many working families, the cost is the barrier. By nearly doubling the fee and eliminating relief for those who cannot afford it, the federal government would make American citizenship a privilege for the wealthy.

There are several technical issues with the proposed fee changes, detailed more fully in a comment below by my Office of Immigrant Affairs. In short, the federal government has miscalculated the impact of this policy. Previous fee changes, proposed by this same federal agency, acknowledged the immense civic and economic gains that come with citizenship. Here in Maryland, immigrants contribute billions to our tax base and economic output; their

100 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21404

(410) 974-3400

TTY Users Call via MD Relay

governor.maryland.gov



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Wes Moore

naturalization is an engine for further growth. It is deeply disappointing to see the Department pivot away from that understanding without a compelling basis.

I urge the Department to withdraw this proposal immediately. We should be working together to encourage, not obstruct, the full integration of those who contribute each and every day to the future of this nation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wes Moore".

Sincerely,
Wes Moore
Governor, State of Maryland

100 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21404
(410) 974-3400
TTY Users Call via MD Relay
governor.maryland.gov