

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(14)

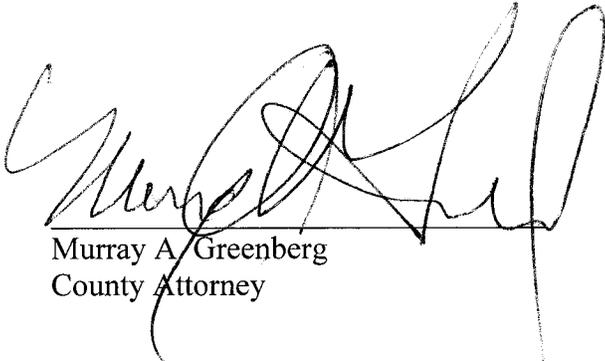
TO: Honorable Chairman Bruno A. Barreiro
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: February 20, 2007

FROM: Murray A. Greenberg
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution in opposition to
69% increase in the
naturalization fees charged by
the U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration Services

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Commissioner Carlos A. Gimenez, Commissioner Joe A. Martinez, Commissioner Katy Sorenson, Commissioner Rebeca Sosa and Senator Javier D. Souto.



Murray A. Greenberg
County Attorney

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MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Bruno A. Barreiro
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

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Please note any items checked.

- "4-Day Rule" ("3-Day Rule" for committees) applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Bid waiver requiring County Manager's written recommendation
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Manager's report for public hearing
- Housekeeping item (no policy decision required)
- No committee review

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(14)
02-20-07

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
IN OPPOSITION TO THE 69% INCREASE IN THE
NATURALIZATION FEES CHARGED BY THE UNITED
STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND
CALLING UPON THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS TO
ADDRESS FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS IN THE EXISTING
METHODS FOR FINANCING IMMIGRATION SERVICES

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

WHEREAS, Miami-Dade County is home to many hardworking, tax-paying, legal permanent residents who are eager to become full Americans by pursuing the dream of U.S. 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 newcomers 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, there are at least 300,000 legal permanent residents in Miami-Dade County who are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the proposed fee increase would place a nearly insurmountable barrier in the path of these legal permanent residents, 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 services; 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 newcomers the wrong message at a time when they are seeking to embrace U.S. citizenship; and

WHEREAS, naturalization benefits Miami-Dade 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 THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that:

Section 1. We strongly oppose the proposed fee increase by USCIS and demand a halt on the fee increase for all naturalization applications.

4

Section 2. 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.

Section 3. 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.

Section 4. The Clerk of the Board is directed to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Director of the USCIS, to 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.

The foregoing resolution was sponsored by Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Commissioner Carlos A. Gimenez, Commissioner Joe A. Martinez, Commissioner Katy Sorenson, Commissioner Rebeca Sosa and Senator Javier D. Souto and offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Bruno A. Barreiro, Chairman	
Barbara J. Jordan, Vice-Chairwoman	
Jose "Pepe" Diaz	Audrey M. Edmonson
Carlos A. Gimenez	Sally A. Heyman
Joe A. Martinez	Dennis C. Moss
Dorin D. Rolle	Natacha Seijas
Katy Sorenson	Rebeca Sosa
Sen. Javier D. Souto	

5

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 20th day of February, 2007. This resolution shall become effective ten (10) days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.



Robert A. Duvall