

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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### **PROPOSED CITIZENSHIP FEE HIKE A BARRIER TO INTEGRATION**

*CLINIC's New Citizenship Plan Recommends Increased Congressional Funding*

WASHINGTON, DC – The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) is deeply concerned with the proposed increase in the application fee for U.S. citizenship. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) proposal to adjust fees for immigration and naturalization applications raises them by 70%. The administration should find a solution that promotes, rather than discourages, immigrant integration.

Just this week, CLINIC published a national citizenship plan, *A More Perfect Union* after more than two years of research, writing, and interviewing more than 108 experts and community advocates. One of its first recommendations is that Congress should help fund application processing. The plan says, “Adequate funding would allow USCIS to halt annual fee increases, reduce its backlogs, and improve the technology for application processing and its customer services.” Unlike USCIS’s proposed fee raise, CLINIC’s plan “should ensure that all Legal Permanent Residents have access to citizenship, regardless of their socioeconomic class or ethnic background.”

Donald Kerwin, CLINIC’s Executive Director, noted that “the administration should not create more barriers to the President’s stated goal of immigrant integration.” In June 2006 President George W. Bush announced a plan “to create a ‘task force on new Americans’ to expand local initiatives to help immigrants integrate into American society.” This fee increase would achieve the opposite. Discouraging low-income legal immigrants from pursuing permanent resident status and citizenship is a strike against the integration efforts of groups such as CLINIC.

Kerwin also stated that “it is clearly in the national interest to support immigrants seeking citizenship. Encouraging integration through government-funded programs strengthens national security. Inviting and involving immigrants in our society’s public institutions is good for our nation.”

The United States is an immigrant nation which is strengthened by the contributions of newcomers of all backgrounds. Raising the obstacles to integration goes against this proud legacy.

**CLINIC’s *A More Perfect Union: A National Citizenship Plan* is available on-line:  
<http://www.cliniclegal.org/DNP/citzplan.html>**

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The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), a subsidiary of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is the nation’s largest network of charitable immigration services with 161 affiliates in 262 field offices around the country. CLINIC advocates for transparent, fair and generous immigration policies. [www.cliniclegal.org](http://www.cliniclegal.org)