

This is a printer friendly version of an article from the **Daily Record**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

02/21/07 - Posted from the Daily Record newsroom

Immigrants to protest increase in citizen fees

Wind of the Spirit's founder says \$265 hike is repressive

BY TEHANI SCHNEIDER
DAILY RECORD

Diana Mejia is no stranger to rallies.

As co-founder of the Morristown-based Wind of the Spirit, Mejia long has been an advocate for immigrant voices in the community, organizing many public demonstrations on their behalf.

Next month she'll take her group to Newark, where members will join more than a dozen other immigration rights groups from across the state rallying at the Rodino Federal Building in protest of the proposed increase in U.S. citizenship application fees.

For naturalization application fees alone, a proposed 66 percent increase means immigrants who currently pay \$330 for the application would have to shell out an extra \$265 to meet the new \$595 fee.

"The current fee structure is based on a 1998 model and it just doesn't cover our costs," said Shawn Saucier, the USCIS northeast manager of communications.

"There's a gap between what it costs to do our business and the income generated by our fees," he said, adding that the proposed fees would close the gap.


Mejia has about 50 supporters from the Morristown area on board for the March 1 rally, and she is expecting more to join the local brigade.

"It's going to affect absolutely everyone. It already has for people to apply for the citizenship," said the Colombian-born Mejia of the proposed fee hike.

"We say it's really a way to repress the community and (doesn't) allow us to be a part of the society," she said.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, however, deems the increase necessary.

Tehani Schneider can be reached at (973) 428-6631 or tschneider@gannett.com.

 Click Image to Zoom (Opens in New Window)

DAILY RECORD FILE PHOTO

Protesters take part in a demonstration organized by Wind of the Spirit to honor immigrants on May 1 at the Green.

Related Graphics:

- ⌘ [Immigration](#)
- ⌘ [Immigration data](#)

Note: Graphics will open in a new browser window

Related Articles:

- ⌘ [Citizenship applications up in '06](#)

Related Websites:

- ⌘ [Citizenship quiz](#)

Note: Pages will open in a new browser window

Advertisement