



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER
Rise Up AND Act for Justice

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Homeland Security Plans to Exorbitantly Increase Fees for Migrants, Asylum Seekers, Green Card Holders & DACA Recipients

The Department of Homeland Security has issued a proposed rule creating new fees and increasing current fees on migrants, asylum seekers, green card holders and DACA recipients with the intention of recovering “the full operating costs associated with administering the nation’s immigration benefits system, safeguarding its integrity, and efficiently and fairly adjudicating immigration benefit requests,” according to the [rule summary](#).

“Since when does the federal government charge a group of people to recoup ‘the full operating costs’ of any section of any agency, especially an agency created in part to serve a vulnerable population?” asked Lawrence E. Couch, director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

“What sort of welcome do we give asylum seekers when we charge them an unprecedented fee? Not much of a welcome at all. But it does put us in interesting company. Only three other countries charge such a levy: Iran, Fiji and Australia,” said Couch.

“And at a time when most of Congress and most Americans believe that DACA recipients should remain in the United States, we are going to nearly double their renewal fees? Make them Americans already!” declared Couch.

Other fees include work permit applications for asylum seekers and several new fees for permanent residents and those seeking naturalization. Currently, asylum seekers are not charged when seeking work authorization for the first time; this would change. Also, separate filing fees would be charged to those seeking permanent residency, greatly increasing their costs from \$1,225 to \$2,195. And the cost of naturalization would shoot up from \$640 to \$1,170. The proposed rule also would effectively end a long-standing waiver program keeping naturalization and green card renewals accessible.

“Who among us would not be burdened by these price hikes that must be paid on the spot? Would our Irish, Italian, German grandparents have been able to pay these malicious fees? In this season of Advent, we prepare our hearts and souls to welcome Jesus. We do this through prayer, the Mass and an active faith demonstrating this welcome to all our sisters and brothers.

“We see through the government’s veil and we call on them – in this Advent season – to call off the attack on migrants, immigrants, DACA recipients and asylum seekers,” said Couch.

The federal government is accepting comments on this proposed rule until midnight December 30 at <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=USCIS-2019-0010-0001>.

[The National Advocacy Center](#) educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations.

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in 1835 and are in 70 countries on 5 continents and have had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. With a presence in 22 states and 1 U. S. Territory, the Sisters and their Lay Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization.

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