



U.S. House of Representatives
Joe Cunningham
1st District, South Carolina

January 3, 2020

Mr. Kenneth T. Cuccinelli
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Mr. Cuccinelli,

I write to express my concern that the Department of Homeland Security's proposed rule, DHS Docket No. USCIS- 2019-0010, could make genealogical research prohibitively expensive for families and researchers in my district.

The proposed rule would increase the fee to search the Master Index of the Genealogy Program from \$65 to \$240 and increase the fee to obtain a copy of a record in that database from \$65 to \$385: an increase of 269% and 492%, respectively.

I appreciate the Department's efforts to improve and cover the costs of the important services it provides, but an increase of this magnitude may make it prohibitively expensive for families researching their past to access their own genealogical records. Under the proposed rule, the cost of finding and retrieving just two records would be more than \$1,000, more than 25% of the average monthly take-home income for households in South Carolina.

The genealogical records held by USCIS belong to the people of the United States, and their government should strive ensure they remain as accessible as possible. Accordingly, I urge you to reconsider the fee adjustment provided in the proposed rule.

Sincerely,

Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs
(MS 2150)
Washington, D.C. 20529



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

January 14, 2020

The Honorable Joe Cunningham
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Cunningham:

Thank you for your January 3, 2020 letter regarding U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) proposed fee schedule.

Your letter was submitted to the appropriate office to be added to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking docket as a public comment and will be carefully considered.

Thank you again for your letter. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew V. Bonic". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew V. Bonic
Acting Chief
Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs