



# STATEMENT

March 14, 2008

On March 11, I announced to members of the House Appropriations Committee that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) had lowered its original processing projections for naturalization applications. Individuals who filed for citizenship during the summer of 2007 can now anticipate an average processing time of 14-16 months for these applications. That's a marked improvement from the 16-18 months projection we announced in January.

During FY 2007, we received approximately 1.4 million naturalization applications. In the months of June and July of 2007 alone, we experienced an increase of nearly 350 percent compared to the same period in 2006. In addressing the significant increase in naturalization cases, and the unprecedented increase in all immigration applications and petitions, the professionalism and hard work of nearly 17,000 dedicated USCIS employees and contractors have been evident.

I am proud of our accomplishments. Still, we remain committed to doing even better. And, we will continue to improve while maintaining our commitment to the integrity of the immigration process and national security requirements.

*Emilio T. Gonzalez*  
*Director*  
*U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*  
*Department of Homeland Security*