



June 24, 2020

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby:

I would like to echo Office of Management and Budget Acting Director Russ Vought's June 19, 2020 letter and request your support to provide \$1.221 billion in appropriated funding to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Due to COVID-19, USCIS is in dire need of a one-time infusion of funding to ensure their operations continue past August 3, 2020.

USCIS operations heavily rely on the revenue raised from fees from applicants and petitioners. In many ways, USCIS operates more like a traditional business rather than a government agency funded entirely by appropriations. For fiscal year 2020, USCIS' annual Immigration Examinations Fee Account fee collections have not met their historical forecasted projections due to the COVID-19 pandemic and operations must be curtailed unless additional funding is provided.

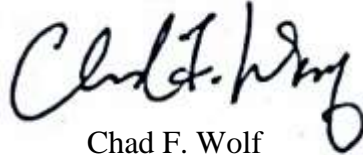
On May 15, 2020, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security proposed a "pay it forward" strategy which will provide \$1.221 billion in appropriated funding up-front in conjunction with an added surcharge to each fee to recoup all the funding provided by the Congress. This deficit neutral approach will come at no additional cost to the U.S. taxpayer while providing the necessary funding to ensure USCIS' near-term operations are not hindered. The Department has already taken steps to reduce operations and costs to the bare minimum; however, these are not sufficient funds to continue USCIS operations.

Without additional funding, USCIS will exhaust funding by August 3, 2020 and will have no other option but to furlough almost 13,400 employees. By law, furlough notices will be issued beginning June 24, 2020.

The USCIS workforce is dedicated to carrying out the Congressional mandate to protect the integrity of our immigration system and secure the homeland. Without your support, the operations and agency contributions to this mission are in jeopardy. USCIS' role and response to the pandemic is pivotal to the well-being of our nation, our economy, and the American people.

I appreciate your support of the Department's funding request to ensure uninterrupted operations of our USCIS workforce as fee revenues rebound.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad F. Wolf". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "W" at the end.

Chad F. Wolf  
Acting Secretary

Enclosure