

Agency rejects streamline plan

by UPI

WASHINGTON - A U.S. immigration service employee says his agency rejected a streamlining plan because it would have resulted in fewer application and renewal fees.

Ombudsman Prakash Khatri says leaders of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services were offered a modernization program last year designed to slash waiting times for green cards and save some \$350 million dollars, The Washington Post reports.

But Khatri says the plan he authored was rejected because ending huge immigration backlogs would rob the agency of application and renewal fees that account for 20 percent of its budget.

The agency's troubles stem from 1986 when the nation granted amnesty to illegal immigrants and Congress required them to cover the cost of citizenship examinations.

As backlogs and deficits grew, the agency upped its charges so the longer applicants waited, the more money they ended up paying.

Current and former immigrant officials have told The Post that Khatri's plan would be unmanageable on a nationwide scale.

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