

SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON INS TO END "CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS WRONG" CULTURE AT CHICAGO FACILITY **RELEASES LIST OF ACTIONS THAT MUST BE TAKEN BY INS**

CHICAGO, IL At a news conference today in Chicago, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) called on Brian Perryman, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Chicago office District Director, to put an end to the "customer is always wrong" culture at the INS. Schakowsky was joined by victims of INS mistreatment and leaders of various immigrant communities to expose the "unacceptable" conditions immigrants face every day at the INS facility in Chicago.

"I witnessed and experienced first-hand what I have been hearing from my constituents and immigration rights advocates about the customer is always wrong culture at the Chicago INS office. What I saw was unacceptable, unprofessional, and, at times, down right hostile service," Schakowsky said. During her tour of the INS facility, she was told by an INS officer to "move or go to jail."

"Because of the inefficiency at the INS, hundreds of people wait in line for hours just to find out that they have to do it all over again tomorrow. Those lucky enough to make it inside the facility are greeted by more lines, unprepared staff, and callous treatment. This is wrong. These people are paying substantial fees and in return, they receive bad service," Schakowsky added.

During her tour of the INS facility in Chicago last week, Schakowsky saw hundreds of people turned away after waiting in line for hours. She talked with many who were forced to stand in line since 6:00 a.m. just to pick up an immigration form and others who were given incomplete, incorrect, or useless information by INS employees.

Schakowsky also found that a large number of people waiting in line were there because of mistakes made by the INS. The applicants were often required to pay another fee even though they were not responsible for the mistake.

"INS officials too often refuse to take responsibility for their actions. The customer seems to comes last. It is time to change this culture and put an end to this abuse," Schakowsky said.

Schakowsky called on the INS to increase the staffing and change procedure to eliminate the line with dispatch. Steps she wants taken immediately are:

Passing out tickets early in the morning to those waiting in line to determine who will be seen that day.

Having all INS forms available at an easily accessible location so that no one has to wait in line for hours just for an immigration form.

Having INS officials walk through the line to answer questions.

□ Providing information immediately to every customer on how to reach the INS and the types □ □ of services available via the Internet and telephone.

□ Customer service training for the staff

□ Errors and mistakes made by INS employees will no longer cost applicants additional fees.

"These are common sense steps that can be taken immediately while we work towards comprehensive reforms of the INS facility in Chicago. □ It is inexcusable to wait any longer," Schakowsky said. □

"Chicago is a city of immigrants. □ I am a first generation American. □ We are all made richer by the wide variety of immigrants that want to make Chicago their home. □ Immigrants have contributed greatly to our community. □ □ They are law-abiding residents who are paying for these services, and there is no excuse to treat them so disrespectfully. □ This is disgraceful," Schakowsky added. {attached} Representative Schakowsky's Visit □

to Chicago INS facility at 10 W. Jackson

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 1999

DURING HER FACT-FINDING TOUR OF THE INS FACILITY IN CHICAGO, REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY SPOKE WITH MANY PEOPLE WAITING FOR SERVICE. □ BELOW ARE ONLY SOME OF THE STORIES SHE HEARD

An applicant filed for naturalization four years ago. □ She found out, after waiting in line for twelve hours last month, that the INS lost her paperwork. □ She was told by an INS employee and a Supervisor that she must return another day and re-file all her paperwork. □ She will have to pay all the fees once again. □ She has already paid more than \$2000.

The INS incorrectly printed the date of birth on the green card of a twelve-year-old child. □ INS officials informed the family that they must fill out another application, wait in line, resubmit the paperwork and pay the fees once again.

Due to numerous mistakes made by the INS, an applicant had returned to the INS facility to wait in line for a second straight day. □ INS employees misspelled her name on her most recent green card. □ She verified on her application that she had spelled her name correctly. □ She called the INS and was told that she must come to 10 W. Jackson and

wait in the line to submit paperwork. She had already waited for seven hours the previous day. When she finally spoke with an INS representative, she was told that she needed to bring photos. She was in line once more to submit more paperwork and the photos. Finally, she will have to pay another fee for a new green card, even though the INS is responsible for the error.

An applicant spent two days in line just to receive a naturalization form (N-400). She was unable to get it the first day and was not told by any INS official that she could get the form online or by calling an 800 number.

A family was waiting in line for hours in order to pick naturalization forms (N-400).

Unable to talk to an INS employee on the telephone to check the status of his naturalization application filed more than eight months ago, an applicant waited in line for hours in order to find out the status of his application.

A couple drove six hours from Belleville, Illinois only to be told that they had to return the next day. They found out by chance that those who travel long distances are entitled to receive service that same day. They were not told this by INS officials.

A daughter was accompanying her mother to inquire about a naturalization application that has been pending for five years. They had submitted fingerprints four times. They began waiting in line at 7:00 am in order to find out the status of the case. They left at 10:20 am when they were told that no more people were being admitted to INS.

After waiting in line for six hours, an applicant, whose permanent resident card never arrived, was told that she needs to reapply and pay all the fees again.

An applicant, who filed for naturalization two years ago, had been in line since 6:45 a.m. to check on the status of her application. Last year, she waited for more than ten hours to check the status of her daughter's application.

A family with small children waited in line for four hours only to be told that they had to return again the next day.

Having spent a third day in line hoping to speak with an INS employee, an applicant was unable to do so today. He had to return the next day.

An applicant had been waiting in line since 6:00 am to find out the status of a notice she was supposed to receive six months ago regarding her citizenship interview.

An applicant spent her second day in line in an attempt to drop off a form to renew her residence card.

An applicant stood in line for the third time in a month hoping to get his passport stamped.

An applicant did not receive her citizenship interview form from INS. She was informed that it was her responsibility to pick it up in person. Her interview is scheduled for July 12, 1999, and she can't attend the interview without the form. As a result, she waited in line for hours to pick up the form.

Two small girls, under the age of 10, lost their parents in a car accident in January and subsequently had all of their paperwork stolen, including their alien registration cards. Their guardians want to take them to Mexico to see their grandparents, and were told they have to stand in line to submit the paperwork to get replacement cards. They have to submit \$110 for each child's application, plus \$25 each for photos. Their day began at 5:30 a.m.

An applicant began her day at 4:30 am. She was hoping to get a an extension on her temporary green card, even though she submitted her paperwork to receive a permanent green card more than eight months ago. She has yet to receive any notification.