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FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
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CHAIRMAN

HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

FIFTH DISTRICT, MISSOURI

HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE  
MODERNIZATION OF CONGRESS

[HTTPS://CLEAVER.HOUSE.GOV](https://cleaver.house.gov)

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As you work to finalize an additional coronavirus relief package, I urge you to include emergency supplemental funding for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) so that operations continue through the end of this fiscal year and into the 2021 fiscal year.

Although primarily funded through fee collection, since May USCIS has been reporting a funding shortfall<sup>1</sup> and planning potential furloughs of over 13,400 federal employees and contractors around the nation, potentially impacting over 3,100 in Missouri's Fifth Congressional District<sup>2</sup>. While the funding shortfall did not begin with the coronavirus pandemic<sup>3</sup>, supplemental funding is needed to continue the important work of administering the nation's legal immigration system and to prevent further exacerbation of the current public health and economic crises.

USCIS employees and contractors perform critical services that contribute to our economy, by processing naturalization applications, employment and family immigration applications and thousands of international adoption applications each year. Employers in my district and around the country rely on USCIS to fill their seasonal and long-term employment needs.

Widespread furloughs would have a crippling impact on the Fifth District of Missouri, as well as the Greater Kansas City Metro Area. More than 3,100 people in the region in both Missouri and Kansas are employed by USCIS as federal employees or through a contractor. At the National Benefits Center offices in Lee's Summit, Missouri and Overland Park, Kansas, the roughly 2,400 staff process applications prepare case files for over 85 field offices to adjudicate on various

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<sup>1</sup> Roll Call "USCIS seeks \$1.2 billion from Congress" Camila DeChalus <https://www.rollcall.com/2020/05/18/uscis-seeks-1-2-billion-from-congress/>

<sup>2</sup> USCIS "Deputy Director for Policy Statement on USCIS' Fiscal Outlook" <https://www.uscis.gov/news/news-releases/deputy-director-for-policy-statement-on-uscis-fiscal-outlook>

<sup>3</sup> Federal Register "USCIS Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements" 2019 <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/12/09/2019-26521/us-citizenship-and-immigration-services-fee-schedule-and-changes-to-certain-other-immigration>

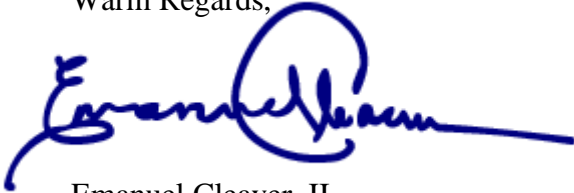
immigration benefits. The National Records Center (NRC) has been located in Lee's Summit since 1999, when the country's most extensive collection of immigrant records was moved to a limestone cave sixty feet underground. The NRC holds nearly sixty million files and adds another one-and-a-half million each year. USCIS operations in the Greater Kansas City Region account for millions of dollars in economic impact each year.

This is also an opportune time to improve operations at USCIS and ensure that funds are not used to discourage applications. I hope that you consider the following:

- Prohibit transfer authority of funds to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Patrol (CBP)
- Repayment of funds through premium processing applications rather than an across-the-board fee increase for all applications.
- Reform the fee structure to improve efficiency and address processing backlogs and ensure that USCIS has sufficient funding moving forward.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support for USCIS employees in Missouri's Fifth District and across the country.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emanuel Cleaver, II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress