From: PublicAffairs, CISOmbudsman [mailto:CISOmbudsman.PublicAffairs@HQ.DHS.GOV]
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 12:54 PM
To: PublicAffairs, CISOmbudsman
Subject: A Message from Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman Maria Odom

Dear Stakeholders:

Over the past 15 years, I have seen the real life consequences of immigration service delivery on many of our country's immigrants. As a former legacy INS counsel, and later as an advocate, I witnessed first-hand how immigration policies and adjudications affect the lives of immigrants, their families, employers, and their communities. I learned that when policies and services are shaped by thoughtful legal interpretation, consistency and a commitment to excellence, cases are processed effectively and individuals experience our country at its very best.

We should all be very proud of our nation's immigration system; it stands strong at this critical juncture and is quite different from the early days when I started practicing immigration law. We should applaud everyone involved in improving one of the most complex systems in our government and the World. As stakeholders, lawmakers, immigrants, advocates and visionaries, we have all played a key role in developing and supporting the impressive immigration system in place today. But that system is not perfect. Together, we bear a collective responsibility to help identify and promote necessary improvements. Let us continue to encourage positive change in areas ripe for progressive solutions.

And so, I am honored to serve as your next Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, taking the reins from Acting Ombudsman Debra Rogers who has shared her vast experience and kept us focused on key initiatives over the past six months.

I have accepted this charge because I believe in the work of this office. By working together with you and our partners at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, we can make a lasting contribution. I pledge to engage with you and, through substantive recommendations and individual case assistance, address the issues and problems you encounter in the delivery of immigration services. With your help and the work of the staff at the Ombudsman's Office we can achieve our important mission.

Please join me for a teleconference on Thursday, October 4th at 2 p.m., during which I will share my vision and welcome your feedback. We will be sending a formal invitation later today.

I am honored to lead the formidable CIS Ombudsman team and look forward to working with all of you.

Sincerely,

Maria Odom
Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman
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Homeland Security

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