

MICHAEL F. BENNET
COLORADO

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
FINANCE
INTELLIGENCE

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0609

WASHINGTON, DC:
261 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5852

COLORADO:
CESAR E. CHAVEZ BUILDING
1244 SPEER BOULEVARD
DENVER, CO 80204
(303) 455-7600
<http://www.bennet.senate.gov>

August 18, 2020

The Honorable Kenneth Cuccinelli
Acting Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20529

Dear Acting Director Cuccinelli:

I write to request that you reconsider the recent decision to close the Application Support Center in Grand Junction, Colorado.

The Application Support Center in Grand Junction serves a vast area of western Colorado. Individuals from across the Western Slope of Colorado, southwest Colorado, and even eastern Utah use the office. The Application Support Center provides many services to applicants, including biometric appointments, application interviews, and extensions of permanent residency. Furthermore, communities across the region use the office as a resource center where applicants can walk in and ask questions about their applications.

If the office is closed, individuals will be forced to travel several hours to Denver or Aurora for these services. The added distance is a burden for those who may have to take time off of work, find childcare, access transportation, and endure harsh weather conditions. The closure is also likely to force applicants to bear added costs for these reasons. Individuals submitting applications to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are already facing abnormally long wait times and large increases in application fees. This closure would provide more barriers and difficulties for those going through the application process at USCIS.

I ask that you respond to this letter by August 28, 2020.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

August 31, 2020

The Honorable Michael F. Bennet
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

Thank you for your August 18, 2020 letter. Mr. Cuccinelli asked that I respond on his behalf.

In the letter, you expressed your concerns about the closing of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) application support center (ASC) in Grand Junction, Colorado. I want to assure you that the decision to close this location was not taken lightly. However, it was unfortunately a necessary decision due to operational and financial constraints. The ASC in Grand Junction has operated at an average of seven percent total capacity during fiscal year 2019 – just ten biometrics appointments per day. Applicants previously scheduled for biometric collection appointments at this ASC will now be scheduled for appointments at the ASC in Aurora, Colorado as we pursue creative solutions for processing applicants closer to Grand Junction outside of an ASC. The last day the ASC in Grand Junction was open for biometrics collection was August 28, 2020.

Approximately half of the applicants will experience shorter to slightly longer drive times to the new ASC location and the other half will see the drive time increase to about an hour or more compared to the drive to Grand Junction. Financial stewardship, and our need to allocate our limited resources to best serve all applicants, made closing this location the most prudent course of action.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Edlow", written over a horizontal line.

Joseph Edlow
Deputy Director for Policy