



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

TALKING POINTS FOR THE DIRECTOR
USCIS-DOS National Immigration and Consular Affairs
Conference for Congressional Staff
U.S. Capitol Visitor Center
March 15, 2019, 12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Closing Remarks

- Thank you, Aaron [Calkins, Director, USCIS Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs].
- I am very happy to be here today.
- I first want to thank the USCIS Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs and all those at USCIS, DHS, the Department of State, and other organizations who worked so hard to bring this conference to you. After seeing the agenda, I know you have covered quite a lot of ground.
- I have now been the director of USCIS for almost a year and a half, and I'm proud of the work we're doing to administer the nation's lawful immigration system, safeguard its integrity, and protect our homeland on behalf of the American people.
- I have met many members of Congress and have testified before some of them.

- I have traveled around the country and visited nearly 30 field offices and more than 10 of our other facilities, including all five service centers. I believe very strongly in hearing from the field and ensuring that they have what they need to do their jobs.
- Visiting these offices allows me to see first-hand the work that is done by our amazing USCIS employees and hear directly from them.
- On my arrival at USCIS, I made it clear to the leadership team that my vision of the agency's mission is one that focuses on lawfulness, efficiency, and transparency.
- Lawfulness – faithfully administering our nation's immigration laws. While some may suggest that USCIS is seeking to curb legal immigration through a series of procedural and regulatory changes, I instead offer that the American public both expect and deserve this agency to do its job in compliance with the will of Congress, as expressed in the Immigration and Nationality Act. Every day, USCIS works closely with other DHS components and agencies across the federal government to faithfully administer lawful immigration to the United States, and also to ensure the safety and security of our nation.
- It is incumbent upon the U.S. government to evaluate applications in a manner consistent with federal law.

- From public charge to asylum reforms to H-1B processing, I have insisted that every policy and process within USCIS is in agreement with that principle.
- Efficiency – moving USCIS into an electronic world.
- The sheer volume of the work that USCIS does makes it imperative that efficiency be one of our key goals.
- Movement from an antiquated paper-based process to one that leverages the latest technology will allow us to process applications and petitions in an efficient and integrated way.
- I am committed to using the technology necessary to support online filing and electronic records management. I believe that an electronic government is the key to increasing efficiency, reliability, and accuracy.
- USCIS is modernizing our IT strategy and business process. We'll enable all applicants to file for benefits online so we can digitize the adjudication of cases. We call this effort "eProcessing," and we see it as good government, good IT, and good for immigration writ large.
- I am happy to report that we are making real progress in this area. Not only in terms of electronic processing of cases by our adjudicators but also the ability for applicants to file forms online. That way everything is handled digitally, from start to

finish. Individuals may now file several forms, including the N-400, Application for Naturalization, online.

- I hope you will encourage your constituents to create a myUSCIS account online if they don't already have one. I believe you had a presentation on myUSCIS earlier this week.
- In myUSCIS, your constituents can track the status of their case, send case-specific messages to the USCIS Contact Center, and receive answers through the secure inbox. They can also file online applications through the account and change their address. MyUSCIS is a much faster way to communicate and correspond with us than traditional mail.
- We are also modernizing how our field offices assist people who need information. Through our national Information Services Modernization project, our field offices will still handle essential services that have to be done in person, but we encourage individuals to use our online self-help tools and the USCIS Contact Center to obtain general information and submit case status inquiries. Getting an answer to a simple or even not-so-simple question shouldn't require a person to make an appointment and travel to a field office that may be many miles away. I'm proud of how we're increasing our accessibility to information services.
- Accessibility also reinforces transparency.

- Transparency – making information available to all.
- Everything we do, from individual case inquiries to massive data requests, should be transparent.
- USCIS, under my leadership, is committed to providing the most accurate and complete information to the public—whether they are applicants, petitioners, the general public, or congressional offices.
- Doing so, I believe, will demonstrate our promise to adjudicate benefit applications and petitions fairly and in accordance with the law.
- We are keeping that promise by posting more information online than ever before and ensuring that the public has direct access to that information.
- USCIS processes an average of 8 million applications, petitions and requests annually. We make as much of that data as possible available on our website to improve public understanding of the immigration system and our role in it.
- Our data is primarily published on the Immigration and Citizenship Data page at uscis.gov/data. On this page you can search by category for specific data or view reports and studies.
- For example, last October we posted for the first time the number of H-1B petitions by gender and country of birth that we received in fiscal year 2018.

- We have updated the Electronic Reading Room on our website to provide the public with access to at least 48 categories of disclosed information, including cleared policy documents and correspondence to Congress. We post every non-case specific response that I send to a member of Congress. In fact, these remarks will soon be posted to the Electronic Reading Room.
- These principles help provide guidance and context to all that we do in support of accomplishing our mission.
- As you help constituents who seek information on immigration applications, petitions, or requests, we hope you will see us as a partner. Our Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs will answer your phone calls and emails as you grapple with the immigration cases you see. And of course, we offer technical assistance to your legislative teams as they craft immigration legislation.
- Along with Assistant Secretary Risch, I want to again thank you for attending this conference. I hope you found it to be informative.
- I'm happy to answer a few questions.