



Press Release

September 13, 2005

USCIS TO WELCOME NEW CITIZENS DURING CITIZENSHIP DAY CELEBRATIONS *Ceremonies Will Highlight the Celebration of American Citizenship*

Washington, DC – More than 2,000 men, women and children will raise their right hands and become America’s newest citizens during special Citizenship Day ceremonies hosted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) across the United States. Held at various locations ([see below](#)), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will commemorate Citizenship Day and kick-off the celebration of Constitution Week during ceremonies aimed at “Celebrating America through the Celebration of Citizenship.”

“Each year, the President issues a proclamation asking Americans, both native born and naturalized, to pause on September 17th and rededicate ourselves to our country and to the principles upon which it was founded,” said acting USCIS Deputy Director Robert Divine. “I can think of no more fitting way to do that than during a naturalization ceremony where we’ll weave our newest citizens into the American tapestry.”

The initiative echoes President Woodrow Wilson’s efforts in 1915 during what he called National Americanization Day. On that date President Wilson, his cabinet members, administration officials as well as prominent public figures spoke at naturalization ceremonies across the country. It was on this occasion that President Wilson challenged his fellow Americans to become “with every purpose of your will thorough Americans.”

Similarly, President Bush has expressed a challenge very much like Wilson’s. “America has never been united by blood or birth or soil,” President Bush has said. “We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles, every citizen must uphold them and every immigrant by embracing these ideals makes our country more, not less, American.”

Each year, USCIS welcomes more than 450,000 citizens during naturalization ceremonies across the United States. Included in that number are more than 10,000 service members who have naturalized through an expedited process stemming from their involvement in the war on terrorism. Read more in our [Fact Sheet](#).

(more)

Oath of Allegiance

“I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation of purpose or evasion; so help me God.”

Naturalization Ceremony Locations (Does not include all ceremonies. * indicates a ceremony to be attended by a DHS principal.)

September 13, 2005
City Hall, Alexandria, Virginia*

September 15, 2005
University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida *
Mount Rushmore, Grand Rapids, South Dakota

September 16, 2005
Tucson Convention Center Music Hall, Tucson, Arizona
Howard Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois
Boulan Park, Troy, Michigan*
Ellis Island, New York, New York*
El Paso Convention Center, El Paso, Texas
Jefferson Memorial, Washington, DC

September 17, 2005
Mesquite High School, Gilbert, Arizona
Fort Nisqually, Tacoma, Washington

September 18, 2005
Old Towne Festival, Gaithersburg, Maryland

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) became one of three former INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.