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Press Release

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH JOINS USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO GONZÁLEZ IN WELCOMING NEWEST U.S. CITIZENS

WASHINGTON, D.C.— President George W. Bush welcomed thirty new Americans from twenty countries at a naturalization ceremony at the Daughters of American Revolution today. President Bush, keynote speaker, joined U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Emilio González, and other USCIS officials.

“Our immigrant heritage has enriched America's history. It continues to shape our society. Each generation of immigrants brings a renewal to our national character and adds vitality to our culture,” remarked President Bush.

The President also noted that “America's welcoming society is more than a cultural tradition, it is a fundamental promise of our democracy. Our Constitution does not limit citizenship by background or birth. Instead, our nation is bound together by a shared love of liberty and a conviction that all people are created with dignity and value. Through the generations, Americans have upheld that vision by welcoming new citizens from across the globe -- and that has made us stand apart.”

The President also discussed immigration reform and said, “America should not have to choose between being a welcoming society and being a lawful society. We can be both at the same time.”

USCIS Director Emilio González administered the Oath of Allegiance to the newest U.S. citizens. In his congratulatory remarks, Director Gonzalez said, “...with your naturalization, you strengthen the cause of freedom, invigorate our democratic institutions and are living proof of the value of immigration into this great land.”

U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales led the new citizens and their guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The 30 new citizens, ranging in age from 18-59, are natives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Iran, Kuwait, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam.

To highlight the importance of citizenship, USCIS special naturalization ceremonies are held at prominent national and historic landmarks nationwide, in addition to those held regularly at U.S. District Courts throughout the country. During fiscal year 2004, more than 537,000 new Americans were sworn-in as U.S. citizens in ceremonies around the nation, including 13,478 residents of Virginia and 43,795 residents from the District of Columbia. Since September 11, 2001, USCIS has naturalized 24,745 military service members.

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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.