



June 19, 2006 (revised)

Press Release

**USCIS TO WELCOME 18,000 NEW AMERICANS
DURING 4th OF JULY CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES**
Ceremonies to Celebrate Citizenship and American Independence

Washington, DC – To commemorate the 230th birthday of the United States, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will host more than 150 special July 4th citizenship ceremonies for 18,000 men, women and children in cities and towns across America.

“USCIS will welcome 18,000 new Americans who came to this country like millions of others from around the world with the simple hope for freedom and a better life—the basic principles upon which our Nation was founded 230 years ago,” remarked USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez. “As we celebrate our Nation’s independence on July 4th, these citizenship ceremonies are a tribute to the memory of our founding fathers who fought to secure freedom and liberty for every citizen and USCIS is doing its part to foster a greater appreciation for these values and welcome new citizens into our American family,” he added.

To highlight the importance of U.S. citizenship, USCIS naturalization ceremonies are being held at prominent national and historic landmarks. From October 1, 2005 to April 30, 2006, USCIS received 392,302 applications for citizenship, a 15 percent increase over the same period in 2004-2005. USCIS is on target to meet the administration’s goal of achieving a 6-month processing standard for all immigration benefit applications by October 1, 2006. During fiscal year 2005, more than 600,000 new Americans were sworn-in as U.S. citizens in ceremonies around the nation.

Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is conferred upon a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Requirements for naturalization include a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the United States; an ability to read, write and speak English; knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government; good moral character; and attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution.

For those interested in beginning the formal citizenship process, information can be obtained at the USCIS website: <http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/index.htm>. USCIS has also created a web page entitled “Faces of America” which highlights the stories of newly naturalized U.S. citizens at <http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/faces.htm> More information can also be obtained at the agency website: www.uscis.gov or at 1-800-375-5283.

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 or purpose of evasion; so help me God.”

Naturalization Ceremony Locations (This list does not include all ceremonies. DHS principals may be added as guest speakers within the next few days.)

July 1, 2006

[San Diego, CA, 6 p.m., PETCO Park](#) (all members of the U.S. military), US Magistrate Judge Barbara L. Major, Richard "Sandy" Alderson, Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego Padres, Debra Rogers, San Diego USCIS District Director.

July 3, 2006

[Orlando, FL, 10:30 a.m., Orange County Convention Center](#), Guest Speaker: Orange County Judge A.B. Majeed.

[Alameda, CA, 10 a.m., USS Hornet](#), Keynote Speaker for this event is Rear Admiral Jody Breckenridge, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Eleventh District.

July 4, 2006

[Seattle, WA, 12 p.m., Seattle Center](#) U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, U.S. Representative Jim McDermott, Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire, Washington Secretary of State San Reed and King County Executive Ron Sims, and Seattle Mayor Gregory J. Nickels.

[Boston, MA, 12 p.m., USS Constitution](#), Guest Speaker: USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez.

[Boston, MA, 2 p.m., The Esplanade](#), Guest Speaker: USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez.

[Danbury, CT, 10 a.m., Tarrywile Park](#).

[Memphis, TN, 9 p.m., Memphis Redbirds Baseball Game](#).

[Phoenix, AZ, 2:30 p.m., South Mountain Community College](#), Alfonso Aguilar, Chief, USCIS/Office of Citizenship, Linda Aguirre, Arizona State Senator District 16, Ana Baca, Deputy Clerk, Federal District Court, Judge George B. Nielsen, Jr., United States Bankruptcy Court, Robert J. Okin, USCIS Phoenix District Director.

July 5, 2006

[Las Vegas, NV, 10:30 a.m.](#) U.S. District Court Judge Lloyd D. George. Judy Harris, Clerk of the Court. Speakers: Las Vegas Mayor Oscar B. Goodman; Chief Alfonso Aguilar, USCIS Office of Citizenship; USCIS Phoenix District Director Robert Okin; and two new citizens.

July 6, 2006

[New York, NY, 10 a.m., USS Intrepid](#), Guest speakers: USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez and U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez.

July 7, 2006

[Atlanta, GA, 8 a.m., Strom Auditorium](#).