



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Press Release

March 10, 2006



USCIS Director Emilio González Recognizes Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) as an “*Outstanding American by Choice*”

Washington, D.C. – To recognize and honor the outstanding contributions to the United States of naturalized citizen

Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA), Emilio T. González, Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), presented the Congressman with USCIS’ “*Outstanding American by Choice*” certificate, at a special ceremony yesterday in the Congressman’s Capitol Hill office. This new USCIS initiative highlights the significant contributions of naturalized United States citizens and demonstrates the positive impact of immigration by recognizing naturalized citizens who are making a special difference in their communities.

Congressman Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor serving in Congress, became a U.S. citizen in 1952 and was elected to the Congress for the 12th District of California in 1980. Currently serving his 13th term in Congress, Mr. Lantos continues to work on a variety of issues affecting his constituency in the San Francisco Bay Area communities, including his lifelong passion for promoting human rights around the world. Mr. Lantos human rights concerns are deeply rooted in his native Budapest, Hungary, where he was born on February 1, 1928. Growing up in Nazi occupied Hungary, he was drawn to anti-Nazi underground activities and subsequently to the anti-communist student activism movement. Mr. Lantos holds bachelors and masters degrees in Economics from the University of Washington in Seattle and received a doctorate in Economics from the University of California at Berkeley.

From 1950 to 1980, Mr. Lantos served in a variety of professional capacities including a professor of economics, an international affairs analyst for public television, and a business consultant. Throughout his tenure on Capitol Hill, Mr. Lantos has been at the cutting-edge of international human rights issues and founded the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and continues to serve as its Co-Chairman.

"My life today, given my background, is something I cannot believe possible. I am privileged to serve the Congress of the United States. I think back to my life fifty years ago, when I was a hunted animal in the jungle, and how I am dealing with issues of state of a country I love so deeply. It all seems like a dream and it all places an incredible sense of responsibility on me. I didn't achieve this because of what I am, it happened because of what this country is," remarked Congressman Lantos.

Throughout the year, Director González will continue to publicly recognize naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to both their community and their adopted country in the areas of professional/business achievements; cultural achievements; community service and civic participation; government service; military service; and overcoming adversity.