



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

June 19, 2006

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, United States 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 six-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 of purpose of evasion; so help me God.”

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

June 27, 2006

Philadelphia, PA, 12 p.m., Pennsylvania Convention Center

June 28, 2006

Tampa, FL, 8 a.m. and 1 p.m., Tampa Convention Center

June 29, 2006

Buffalo, NY, 8:15 a.m., USS Little Rock

June 30, 2006

Middletown, CT, 1 p.m., City Hall

Chicago, IL, 11 a.m., Harold Washington Library

Springfield IL, 11 a.m., Old State Capitol

Aurora, CO, 9:30 a.m., and 1 p.m., King Academic & Performing Arts Center

Houston, TX, 10 a.m. Children’s Museum (special children’s ceremony)

Anchorage, AK 10 a.m., BP Energy Center

Los Angeles, CA, 9 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 2 p.m., Quiet Cannon Montebello

July 1, 2006

San Diego, CA, 6 p.m., Petco Park (all members of the U.S. military)

Salt Lake City, UT, 8 p.m., University of Utah Stadium

St. Paul, MN, 10 a.m., Fort Snelling

July 3, 2006

Southport, NC, 5 p.m.

Orlando, FL, 10:30 a.m., Orange County Convention Center, Guest Speaker: Orange County Judge A.B. Majeed

San Juan, Puerto Rico, 6 p.m., San Cristobal National Park, Old San Juan, Guest Speaker: Alfonso Aguilar, Chief of Citizenship

Tucson, 10 a.m., Tucson Convention Center

Alameda, CA, 10 a.m., USS Hornet

July 4, 2006

Saratoga, NY, Saratoga Battlefield National Historic Park
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
Mumford, NY, 10 a.m., Genesee Country Village & Museum
Danbury, CT, 10 a.m., Guest Speaker: Mayor Mark Boughton, Mayor of Danbury
Manchester, NH, 11 a.m., Strawberry Banke Museum
Memphis, TN, 9 p.m., Memphis Redbirds Baseball Game
Phoenix, AZ, 2:30 p.m. South Mountain Community College

July 5, 2006

Las Vegas, NV, 10:30 a.m. U.S. District Court, Guest speaker: Mayor Oscar Goodman
Seaside, CA, 9:30 a.m., Speaker: Congressman Sam Farr

July 6, 2006

New York, NY, 10 a.m., USS Intrepid, Guest speaker: USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez and tentative: DHS Secretary Chertoff.

July 7, 2006

Atlanta, GA, 8 a.m., Strom Auditorium
Calexico, CA, 2 p.m., Calexico City Hall