

October 29, 2021

Acting Commissioner Troy Miller
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Department of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20229

Dear Acting Commissioner Miller,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to request that you implement a new policy requiring U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers to provide lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who arrive at U.S. ports of entry with information about the naturalization process. We believe this request is very much in line with the [Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization](#).

The undersigned organizations are leading national immigration and service organizations, including partners in the [New Americans Campaign](#), that help aspiring Americans reach their dream of citizenship.

We believe that CBP personnel at ports of entry have a unique opportunity to inform the eligible-to-naturalize population about how to apply for U.S. citizenship. The United States is home to nearly 9 million LPRs who are eligible to naturalize, but 61 percent of those eligible have not received information about how to become U.S. citizens. The lack of outreach has discouraged many of them from naturalizing simply because they do not know how to start the process. However, about 44 percent of LPRs eligible to naturalize, or 3.9 million people, travel outside the United States at least once a year. Before re-entering the country, these 3.9 million LPRs interact and provide documents to CBP officers at ports of entry. Since most LPRs are eligible to apply for naturalization five years after they become permanent residents, CBP officers can easily identify individuals who may be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship by looking at their permanent resident card and provide them with information to take that step.

LPRs go through extensive background and security checks as part of the naturalization process. More naturalized citizens would mean fewer LPRs, which would reduce the amount of time CBP officers must spend on processing non-citizens at ports of entry. Once LPRs naturalize, they can also utilize innovative entry programs, such as the Automated Passport Control (APC) self-service kiosks and the Mobile Passport Control programs at airports, helping to reduce long wait times at ports of entry. At the end of the day, a friendly reminder about naturalization has benefits for everyone.

CBP should adopt a campaign to inform and encourage LPRs to naturalize. Some of the undersigned organizations, through the "[Red, White and Blue: Time for Citizenship](#)" campaign, have undertaken some of these same actions at their respective local international airports. We recommend that CBP commence a comparable campaign by taking the following immediate actions:

- 1. Include citizenship information in CBP brochures and web pages.** CBP should add information to its existing brochures at Ports of Entry (POEs) to inform LPRs that they may be eligible for naturalization five years after receiving permanent resident status, or three years if they are married to a U.S. citizen. CBP should also add such information to web pages containing travel information for LPRs, such as Automated Passport Control, Customs

Declaration Form (6059B), Are You Planning a Trip to Mexico from the United States, and Know Before You Go.

2. Add 30-second videos on citizenship to the television monitors in passport and custom control lines at POEs. CBP should include 30-second video public service announcements (PSAs) produced by USCIS for the Citizenship Public Education and Awareness Campaign in the television monitors at the passport and customs control lines at POEs. These monitors already provide informational videos on the entry process. By adding 30-second videos on citizenship to the programming, CBP would help eligible LPRs waiting at passport and custom control lines learn more about the process to become U.S. citizens.

3. Equip self-service kiosks at POEs to provide automatic messages with citizenship information. CBP should equip the Automated Passport Control (APC) self-service kiosks to provide an automatic message to eligible LPRs about their possible eligibility for U.S. citizenship and the benefits of naturalization.

Ultimately, we recommend that CBP adopt a uniform, agency-wide campaign to inform and encourage LPRs to naturalize. CBP could and should direct personnel inspecting travel documents at all POEs to verbally remind LPRs who are eligible for naturalization that they can become U.S. citizens, provide basic information about the eligibility requirements to naturalize and include citizenship posters, videos and other materials near the passport control or customs lines. At a minimum, CBP should implement a comprehensive pilot program in selected ports of entry.

We are grateful for the changes CBP's has made in the past to add more information about naturalization on its website. There is, however, still much more that could be done to encourage as many LPRs as possible to naturalize by providing citizenship information at ports of entry. We look forward to working with you on this issue and to your response.

Organizations

ACRS

Asian American Federation of Florida

Asian American Federation of Florida - South Region

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles

Asian Caribbean Exchange

Asian Community Development Council

Asian Services in Action (ASIA)

Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Immigration Justice Task Force

CAIR-FL

Campeños Sin Fronteras

Catholic Charities Dallas

Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton

Catholic Charities of Baltimore

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

Catholic Social Services

Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS)

Chaldean Community Foundation

Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC)

Dominicanos USA

Emerald Isle Immigration Center

Employee Rights Center

Esperanza Immigration Legal Services

Florida Asian Services

Florida Asian Women Alliance

GMHC

HIAS Pennsylvania

iHICA! Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama

Hispanic Services Council

Hispanic Unity of Florida

Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas

Hmong American Women's Association, inc.

IL Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
Immigrant Welcome Center
Immigration Institute of the Bay Area
Indian Horizon of Florida ,inc
International Institute of Minnesota
International Rescue Committee
Korean Resource Center (KRC)
Latin American Coalition
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
Mi Familia Vota
MinKwon Center for Community Action
MIRA
NALEO Educational Fund
National Immigration Forum
National Tongan American Society
New York Immigration Coalition
North Carolina Asian Americans Together
OCA South Florida Chapter
OCCORD
OneAmerica
Pro Bono Net
Project Citizenship
Promise Arizona

Public Law Center

San Francisco Pathways to Citizenship

SEAMAAC

Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Self Help for the Elderly

Somos un Pueblo Unido

TODEC Legal Center

UnidosUS

Welcoming America

CC: Eva A. Millona, Assistant Secretary for Partnership and Engagement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security