



A MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO T. GONZÁLEZ

As a naturalized American, I approach my job with an inherent sensitivity to immigrants' concerns. As USCIS Director I have the unique opportunity to help improve the path that my family and I once traveled, and make the American immigration journey more efficient, meaningful and most importantly, more secure.

As you may know, President Bush recently called on Congress to produce legislation to comprehensively reform existing American immigration law. His proposal centered around five pillars:

Achieving effective control of the border, building a robust interior enforcement program, establishing a Temporary Worker Program, bringing illegal aliens in the U.S. out of the shadows and promoting the assimilation of new immigrants.

Immigration reform legislation before Congress varies in scope and size, however, each bill centers around the creation of a lawful mechanism allowing foreign workers to come into the United States on a temporary basis and fill jobs that U.S. workers do not want. This regulated channel for temporary workers would dramatically reduce the pressure on our borders, aid our economy and ensure our historic legacy as a nation of immigrants. I believe there are several key principles that can ensure the success of any temporary worker program (TWP).

First, we must have clear application standards to protect the applicant, guide our adjudication and prevent fraud. Understanding the number of likely eligible applicants, the adjudication must be simple and straightforward - both for the applicant and the adjudicators. We must ensure that any judicial review is limited so as not to create an excessive and extended backlog in the courts. Similarly, illegal immigrants applying for these benefits should not receive judicial access that is not afforded to those that apply legally overseas. At the same time, counterterrorism and law enforcement investigators should not be hobbled by artificial walls of "confidentiality" that hamper our ability to protect Americans.

We know that there needs to be certain administrative flexibility in order to successfully implement and manage a TWP, as this would be a significant additional workload on top of the millions of applications and petitions USCIS manages today. To do this work, we will need sufficient time and resources to develop new regulations and implement contract requirements, as well as to hire and train a new corps of adjudicators.

These are just a few thoughts as to the measures needed to build a successful immigration service for the future. However, efforts to modernize and transform our national immigration service into a 21st century operation are already underway. In addition to improving our brick and mortar facilities, and training and hiring staff, we are enhancing security, improving efficiency and preparing our agency to better handle future immigration reform by moving from a paper-based system to an electronic immigration database platform.

The viability of these initiatives will be bolstered by our ability to recover the true costs of doing business through an updated fee structure. However, our ultimate success in these efforts will rely on the work of dedicated USCIS professionals who strive to provide the highest-quality customer service within a secure framework. Every USCIS employee shares in the responsibility to make our nation greater, and with the right cooperation and communication we will continue to assist those who come here seeking freedom, prosperity and the hope for a better future.

APRIL 2007

"USCIS: Helping future Americans"

[A Message from USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez](#)

[Coming Soon: New USCIS Facilities](#)

[Secretary Chertoff and Director Gonzalez Welcome New Citizens at Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital](#)

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COMING SOON: NEW USCIS FACILITIES TO A NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR YOU!



The planned front exterior of the new Miami Field Office

USCIS is proud to introduce the model of USCIS operations for the 21st century with a new modern office design and facilities revitalization initiative. The goal of this national program is to transform USCIS District and Field Offices into full-service, community-based customer processing facilities.

These new buildings are more than just bricks and mortar. They are a tangible symbol of USCIS' commitment to modernize and transform the way we do business. Over the next three years, USCIS will replace or renovate 36 office locations across the country. These facilities will contain all the resources necessary to efficiently process benefit applications and petitions, making each location a one-stop-shop for all immigration related needs.

This full-service facility concept will make it easier for clients to access services by eliminating the need for them to travel to multiple locations during the application process. It will also greatly enhance the level and efficiency of services USCIS provides by increasing opportunities to conduct interviews, answer customer questions and conduct on-site naturalization ceremonies, all in one location.

USCIS is identifying the best locations to build new offices based on geographic analysis of where our customers are and how we can best provide services. In some cases, the analysis will indicate the need to renovate or replace an existing facility with an upgraded, centrally located, full-service office. In other cases, the analysis will show the need to replace an existing structure with several smaller full-service offices in surrounding areas, bringing services closer to the communities where the applicants live.

The decision to renovate or replace a facility depends on its physical condition and sustained ability to meet the USCIS mission and the needs of its customers. When the Department of Homeland Security assumed control of immigration services, most of the facilities were overcrowded, inefficient and located in areas that did not serve the immigrant community. Because it is cost-prohibitive to replace all facilities at once, USCIS is using a systematic approach, focusing on the worst facilities first, followed by successive upgrades to new facilities as leases expire.

The goal is to renovate or replace approximately a dozen facilities each year beginning with the four full-service offices in Miami and the surrounding communities. Other upcoming projects include replacing the Orlando field office, the Denver district office, the Dallas district office, the West Palm Beach field office and the Portland, Ore. field office.



An artist's rendering of the waiting area in the future USCIS Miami Field Office (above) and the lobby entrance area (below)



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE NEW USCIS FACILITIES PLAN:

[Fact Sheet: Southeast Florida Field Offices](#)

[Fact Sheet: Miami Field Office](#)

[Fact Sheet: Broward County Field Office](#)

[Fact Sheet: Hialeah Field Office](#)

[Fact Sheet: Orlando Field Office](#)

[Fact Sheet: Kendall Field Office](#)

SECRETARY CHERTOFF AND DIRECTOR GONZALEZ WELCOME NEW CITIZENS AT WALTER REED

Three Soldiers and a Marine took the oath of citizenship in a naturalization ceremony at Walter Reed Army Medical Center hosted by the Defense and Homeland Security departments. Not only did the four new citizens sign up to defend their adopted home, they all were injured while serving their adopted nation, deployed in Iraq.

"By your willingness to become citizens, you keep alive the dream of countless immigrant Soldiers who have come before you and will surely follow in your footsteps," Director Gonzalez said.

After he administered the Oath of Allegiance, Secretary Chertoff told the new citizens that immigrants have long been a benefit to the United States by boosting the economy, strengthening the culture, and blessing communities.

"You four who became citizens today have done something more," he said. "Even before you took the oath, you put duty, honor and country ahead of yourselves. You have already done what you just swore to do."

Army Spcs. Angel Regalado-Contreras, Eduardo Garcia-Gonzalez and Pfc. Dwishnicka Randolph, and Marine Lance Cpl. Carlos Lopes became citizens in the fifth such ceremony hosted at Walter Reed since President Bush signed an executive order in 2002 expediting naturalization for servicemembers.

To date, USCIS has naturalized more than 26,000 servicemembers, with 1,006 of those becoming citizens while serving outside the United States. About 40,000 members of the armed forces are eligible to apply for naturalization.

Recent changes of the Immigration and Nationality Act have streamlined the naturalization process for military personnel serving on active duty or those who have recently been discharged. Since October 2004, servicemembers no longer have to pay a fee when filing for citizenship.

Randolph, who was born in Haiti, said she now has an even greater sense of belonging since taking the oath. "It feels great to be a citizen," Randolph said. "It's a blessing to be in the military. I think it's a great honor to wear the military uniform."

The 26-year-old Soldier said the first thing she was going to do as a citizen was head to the Department of Motor Vehicles and register to vote.

For Soldiers like Garcia-Gonzalez, being a citizen will make life better once out of the military. Originally from Mexico, he is awaiting medical discharge following a tour with the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq. "I feel relieved," he said. "Now I have better job opportunities when I get out of the Army."



DON'T WAIT IN LINE, GO ONLINE AT WWW.USCIS.GOV

OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

The *Outstanding American by Choice* initiative recognizes the achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to the country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. Throughout the year, USCIS Director González will continue to recognize naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to both their communities and adopted country.



JOSEFINA G. CARBONELL

Josefina G. Carbonell was appointed by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the Senate as Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in August 2001. She has extensive experience in community-based long-term care services having served as the President and CEO of Little Havana Activities & Nutrition Centers (LHANC) in Dade County, Florida, an organization she helped establish in 1972.

A native of Cuba, Ms. Carbonell attended Florida International University and was the recipient of a fellowship in health management at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. As the longest-serving Assistant Secretary for Aging, Ms. Carbonell has focused on the importance of community-based organizations helping adults as they age. Under her leadership, the National Family Caregiver Support Program was successfully implemented. Ms. Carbonell is also focused on establishing enduring partnerships among health and human service entities at the national, state, and local levels to further healthy aging and care for adults as they age. She is nationally recognized for her work and is the recipient of numerous awards.

DR. CRISTINA V. BEATO

Dr. Cristina V. Beato is focused on leading the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) efforts to reduce health disparities, combat HIV/AIDS, encourage prevention strategies for reducing chronic diseases, and advance women's health. She is a spokesperson for HHS and has been actively involved in the Department's efforts to encourage immunizations, increase preparedness for public health emergencies, promote research integrity and ethics, and establish a women's hospital in Afghanistan.



Board certified in family medicine, Dr. Beato has dedicated her professional life to improving the health and well being of individuals, families, and communities. She emigrated from Cuba in her childhood, and went on to receive her undergraduate and medical school education at the University of New Mexico (UNM). During her medical residency, Dr. Beato instituted the first formal medical community outreach program for abused, neglected, and abandoned children at the All Faiths Receiving Home in Albuquerque where she later served as medical director. Prior to joining the Department, Dr. Beato served her community in various capacities, including as the UNM School of Medicine associate dean for clinical affairs and chief medical officer of the UNM Hospital System, the first woman to serve in that position.



ADOPTED VALOR: IMMIGRANT HEROES

FOREIGN BORN MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

LIEUTENANT JOHN KELVIN KOELSCH - KOREA

Born in London, United Kingdom, John Koelsch, joined the U.S. Naval Reserve in an attempt to see action in the European theatre of WWII. In 1942, the newly naturalized 19-year-old was commissioned as a Navy Ensign. After completing flight training courses, he later became an accomplished torpedo bomber pilot, but he was unable to realize his desire to see action in WWII before hostilities ended.

Koelsch's call of duty would come after the outbreak of Communist aggression in Korea, when he was assigned to a newly formed Helicopter Squadron as the Officer in Charge aboard the USS Princeton. This specialized unit was primarily responsible for rescue missions off the coasts of Korea for pilots who were downed either in enemy waters or over enemy-held territory.

Late in the afternoon of July 3, 1951, Lieutenant (JG) Koelsch responded to a distress call from a Marine aviator, Capt. James V. Wilkins, whose Corsair had been hit by enemy fire during an armed reconnaissance mission about 35 miles southwest of Wonsan, Korea. Capt. Wilkins parachuted from his burning plane at low altitude; and, though severely burned about the legs, he survived.

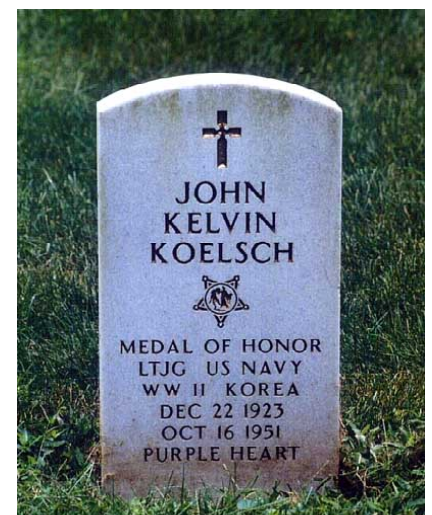
Despite approaching darkness, worsening weather, and enemy ground fire, Lt. Koelsch located the downed aviator in the Anbyon Valley and began his pickup. Thick fog prevented air cover from protecting the unarmed helicopter, and as Lt. Koelsch's crewman, George M. Neal, hoisted the injured pilot into the helicopter, a burst of enemy ground fire downed the craft. Quickly extricating his crewmen and the aviator from the wreckage, Lt. Koelsch led them from the vicinity in an effort to escape from hostile troops.

After hiding in the mountains from enemy patrols for 3 days, they began a slow march to the coast. After 6 more days, they reached a coastal village but they were captured the following day while hiding in a hut. During his captivity, though beaten and abused, Koelsch refused to aid his captors or submit to interrogation. His fortitude and personal bravery inspired his fellow prisoners. John Koelsch died of malnutrition and dysentery on 16 October 1951, while a prisoner of war. On 3 August 1955, Lieutenant Junior Grade John Kelvin Koelsch was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in Korea. He was the first helicopter pilot to be awarded the Medal of Honor.

John Koelsch's body was eventually returned to the United States and buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia. The Navy later named a destroyer escort, USS Koelsch (DE-1049) in honor of this naturalized American hero.



Name: John Koelsch
Rank: Lieutenant Junior Grade
Branch: U.S. Navy
Nation of Birth: United Kingdom



A REVIEW OF MILITARY RECORDS SHOWS THAT 715 OF THE 3,410 CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS IN AMERICA'S HISTORY--MORE THAN 20 PERCENT--HAVE BEEN IMMIGRANTS TO THIS NATION.



“HOW DO I...?”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AT USCIS

HOW DO I... BRING MY CHILD, SON OR DAUGHTER TO LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES?

This information is for United States (U.S.) citizens and lawful permanent residents who wish to bring their child(ren) to live permanently in the U.S. Please note: If you are in the U.S. and considering adopting an orphan from another country, you should refer to [How Do I Apply to Bring a Foreign-Born Orphan to the U.S.?](#)

Overview of Immigration Process

A legal immigrant (or “lawful permanent resident”) is a foreign national who has been granted the privilege of living and working permanently in the United States. There is a three-step process for your child, son or daughter, to become a legal immigrant. You must obtain USCIS approval of an immigrant visa petition that you file for your child, son or daughter.

The State Department must then give your son or daughter an immigrant visa number, even if he or she is already in the United States. If you are a U.S. citizen and the child is both under 21 years of age and unmarried, a visa number is not required.

If your child, son or daughter, is outside the United States, he or she will be notified to go to the local U.S. consulate to complete the processing for an immigrant visa when one becomes available. If your child or son or daughter is legally in the U.S. when an immigrant visa number becomes available (or if one is not required), he or she may apply to adjust status to that of a lawful permanent resident using the [Form I-485, Application to Register for Permanent Residence or Adjust Status](#).

Who is Eligible to Be a Sponsor?

A **U.S. citizen** may petition for:

- A child (unmarried and under 21 years of age)
- An unmarried son or daughter (21 years of age or older)
- A married son or daughter of any age

A U.S. citizen’s unmarried, minor child is considered an immediate relative, does not need a visa number, and is eligible to receive an immigrant visa immediately.

Otherwise, sons and daughters of U.S. citizens will be eligible for a visa when their priority date is listed on the [Department of State Visa Bulletin](#).

If your unmarried, minor child was admitted or paroled into the U.S., he or she may file the [Form I-485](#), at the time you file your [Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative](#).

A **lawful permanent resident** may petition for:

- A child (unmarried and under 21 years of age)
- An unmarried son or daughter (21 years of age or older)

A lawful permanent resident may not petition for a married son or daughter. If you had children before you became a permanent resident and you did not immigrate as an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen, your unmarried, minor children may be eligible to receive following-to-join benefits. This means that you do not have to submit a separate [Form I-130](#) for your children, and your children will not have to wait any extra time for a visa number to become available. See the Petitioning Procedures for more information on following-to-join benefits. Otherwise, children of LPRs will be eligible for a visa when their priority date is listed on the [Department of State Visa Bulletin](#).

How Do I File the Petition?

To petition for your child, son or daughter, to live in the United States permanently you should file a [Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative](#). To find out how to file this petition, please see Petitioning Procedures, which will help you identify what you need to do.

Exception: If you are a U.S. citizen petitioning for an orphan, you must file a petition to classify an orphan as an immediate relative. The petition is Form I-600, and the form to use for advance processing is Form I-600A.

How Can I Check the Status of My Visa Petition?

To check the status of your visa petition, you will need to contact the USCIS office that received it. Full instructions can be found at [Finding the Status of Your Case](#).

For more information on adjusting to permanent resident status, your child, son or daughter, should refer to [How Do I Become a Lawful Permanent Resident While in the United States?](#)

USCIS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

THE LAS VEGAS OFFICE HOLDS A SPECIAL NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

On February 23, 2007, the Las Vegas Field Office facilitated a special naturalization ceremony at the home of Pricha "Alex" Vongchaichinsri. Originally from Thailand, Vongchaichinsri, 46, moved to the United States in 1976 and applied for U.S. citizenship last year. Recently, Vongchaichinsri was diagnosed with a terminal form of cancer.

"His family asked for the special in-home ceremony as his last wish," said Las Vegas Field Office Director Lola Parocua. "His wife told us that he hopes to go to heaven as a United States Citizen and leave his two children to live here where they will be safe."

Senior U.S. District Judge Lloyd George presided over the special naturalization as Vongchaichinsri's wife, daughter and brother, looked on. Vongchaichinsri's daughter, Lynrada, 10, led the small group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Parocua sang the national anthem and Las Vegas' newest citizen joined in.

Parocua and Adjudication Officer Pam Bugbee added special touches to the in-home ceremony, bringing American treats such as a Monopoly game, a baseball and an apple pie, along with yellow roses representing the color of the King of Thailand. The applicant and family were overcome with joy and appreciation at the kindness and thoughtfulness of USCIS Las Vegas employees.

"That was touching," said Alex's older brother, Joe, after the naturalization ceremony. "He got his dying wish."



The Vongchaichinsri family gathers for a picture with Judge George and Adjudication Officer Pam Bugbee (above) Alex and Pam (below)



NEWS YOU CAN USE...

FROM USCIS COMMUNICATIONS

[USCIS Creates New Office of Security and Integrity](#) - 03/15/2007

[Status of Adoptions from Guatemala](#) - 03/09/2007

[USCIS Announces Employment Authorization Update for TPS Recipients from Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador](#) - 03/09/2007

[USCIS Announces Direct Filing Instructions for Forms I-129 and I-539 Under the Bi-Specialization Initiative](#) - 03/08/2007

[Update: Information to Help Complete and Submit I-129 Petitions to USCIS Service Centers for FY 2008 H-1B Cap Cases](#) - 03/27/2007

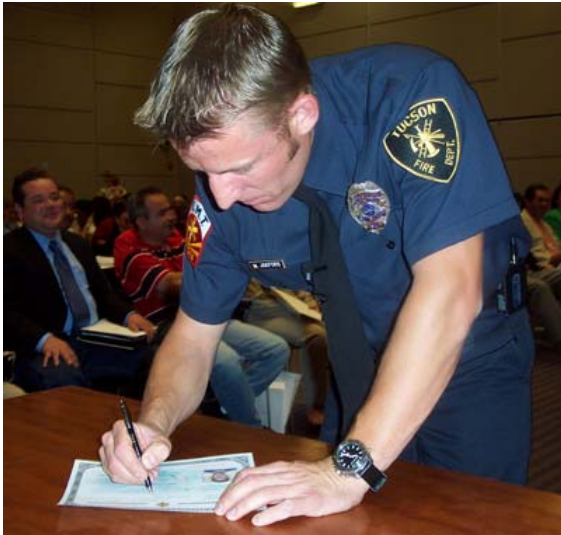
[Update: USCIS to Accept H-1B Petitions for FY 2008 on April 2](#) - 03/27/2007

[Consular Offices Abroad Resume Accepting I-130 Petitions, New Procedures Implemented by USCIS and Department of State](#) 03/26/2007

[USCIS Reaches H-2B Cap for Second Half of Fiscal Year 2007](#) - 03/23/2007



USCIS: ENHANCING EFFICIENCY



Mark Jakfors signs his Naturalization Certificate

FACES OF AMERICA

NEW CITIZENS, UNIQUE STORIES

MARK JAKFORS – SWEDEN

USCIS Tucson Field Office employees joined local firefighters in welcoming one of their own as a new U.S. citizen on Friday, March 16. Firefighter and EMT Mark Jakfors, a native of Sweden took the Oath of Allegiance at a ceremony in Tucson as his fellow crew from the Tucson Fire Department looked on.

Jakfors is another example of an immigrant to the United States who has chosen to give back to his adopted nation and regularly risk his life to protect the members of his new community. Jakfors, who is married with three children, says officially being American feels different, "It feels like you're really part of the country now."

He was first to walk to a microphone when the presiding judge, U.S. District Court Judge David C. Bury, asked new citizens to share their thoughts. Jakfors said, "I would just like to thank this great country for giving me the opportunity to become a citizen. I would like to thank the city of Tucson for giving me the best job in the world."

"We've had a couple study sessions at the station," said Tucson Fire Captain Mike Garcia. "And he's taught us a lot along the way, too."

Jakfors moved to the U.S. 10 years ago from Sweden and has worked for the Tucson Fire Department for the past two years. His wife, Meggan, said, "He's always been an American at heart."

Tucson is located one hour north of the U.S.-Mexico border, and two hours south of Phoenix. It is the 30th largest city in the country, with a metropolitan population of about 800,000. Fires are a regular danger in this city, located in the Sonoran Desert and known for its hot summers, when temperatures can soar above 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

**ARE YOU ONE OF THE FACES OF AMERICA?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH USCIS**

ON ANY GIVEN DAY AT USCIS...

...the **16,000** federal and contract employees of USCIS accomplish the following at our **250** offices worldwide:

- Welcome **2,100** new citizens
- Welcome **3,500** new permanent residents
- Naturalize **20** individuals serving in the United States military

Check the next issue of [USCIS Today](#) or the [USCIS Day in the Life](#) profile for more statistics on what we do every day to effectively and efficiently administer our nation's immigration system.

USCIS AND DHS: SECURING OUR HOMELAND