



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Media Services
Office of Public Affairs
(202) 514-2648 Fax: (202) 514-1776

September 17, 2002

INS to Swear in 15,000 New Citizens on Citizenship Day

WASHINGTON – In observance of Citizenship Day on September 17, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will administer the oath of allegiance to more than 15,000 immigrants during 23 naturalization ceremonies throughout the country. Completing the final step in their journey to U.S. citizenship, applicants will mark the occasion on the day established to honor both native-born and naturalized citizens.

“These ceremonies are a tribute to the memory of our founding fathers who on September 17, 1787, created our system of government with the signing of the U.S. constitution,” said INS Commissioner James Ziglar. “INS is doing its part to foster a greater appreciation for the constitution by welcoming new U.S. citizens.”

During the first 10 months of fiscal year 2002, there was a 58 percent increase in the receipt of applications for naturalization while 454,069 applicants for naturalization took the oath of citizenship. Between October 2001 and July 2002, more than 611,000 applications were received while 501,646 were received in fiscal year 2001.

With a reduced nationwide average processing time for naturalization applications ranging from six to nine months, INS is on target to meet the current administration’s long-term goal of achieving a six-month processing standard for all immigration benefit applications.

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; residence in a particular INS District prior to filing; 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.

The Oath of Allegiance for New Citizens

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.

- INS -