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News Release

USCIS RECOGNIZES THREE OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

White House Indian Treaty Room Site of Awards Presentation and Special Naturalization Ceremony

WASHINGTON—Three *Outstanding Americans by Choice* were recognized today by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Emilio Gonzalez during a special White House ceremony. The awards were presented during a special naturalization ceremony for 25 of America's newest citizens.

"It's a pleasure and honor to recognize these *Outstanding Americans* during a ceremony in which they can help us welcome our newest citizens to the American family," Gonzalez said. "Today, our newest citizens truly have role models by which they can aspire to become outstanding Americans themselves."

Hosted by the White House Office of Public Liaison, the event in the Indian Treaty Room in the West Wing honored three naturalized U.S. citizens for their outstanding achievements. *American by Choice* awards were presented to Franklin Chang Diaz (*Costa Rica*), Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ad Astra Rocket Company in Houston; Carlos M. de Cespedes (*Cuba*), Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pharmed Group Corporation in Miami; and Peter W. Schramm (*Hungary*), Executive Director, John M. Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs and Professor of Political Science, Ashland (Ohio) University.

The *American by Choice* initiative recognizes the significant achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship. Recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to our Nation and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans.

The day was also special to 25 men and women – including a U.S. Army soldier – who took the *Oath of Allegiance* from Director Gonzalez and became the country's newest U.S. citizens. The new citizens are originally from Australia, China, Cyprus, Estonia, Grenada, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Tanzania and Turkey.

USCIS naturalizes nearly 700,000 individuals a year. More information about [*Americans by Choice*](#) and the [naturalization](#) process is available on the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov.

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