



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

USCIS TODAY



A MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO T. GONZÁLEZ

One of the critical keys to the ongoing debate in Congress over immigration reform legislation is the implementation of a secure employment verification system. Clearly, only an effective electronic employment verification program can accomplish the overall goal of reducing unauthorized employment. At USCIS, we have the model for the future of this program in the Basic Pilot Employment Verification Program.

In July, we celebrated our successful partnership with more than 10,000 employer participants in the Basic Pilot Employment Verification Program, and new businesses nationwide continue to sign up for this free way of instantly verifying the employment eligibility of their new hires. Participation in this free program has more than doubled during the first three quarters of this fiscal year. Nearly 200 new employers are joining the Employment Verification Program each month. These businesses are verifying the work authorization of more than one-million new hires each year at 36,000 worksites across the United States.

Although a likely model for a future mandatory national Employment Verification Program, the current Basic Pilot Program was designed as a relatively small-scale operation and related proposals currently before Congress are much more than the simple expansion of the Basic Pilot. It will take additional time, considerable funding, a new fee structure, and significant manpower to design the necessary systems, electronic connections, and inter-agency links required under a comprehensive Employment Verification Program. In addition, concerns over civil liberties and privacy issues hamper proposals to establish a comprehensive employee database that includes biometric information.

Despite these obstacles, USCIS is already planning for the expansion of the program. The President's Fiscal Year 2007 budget request includes \$110 million to expand and improve the program. USCIS is currently adapting the system to allow an employer to query by the new hire's card number, when that worker has a secure I-551 (green card) or secure Employment Authorization Document. This enhancement will significantly improve the speed at which USCIS will be able to verify the employment eligibility of many non-citizen new hires because the system will verify the card number against the repository of the information that was used to produce the card, resulting in a one-to-one match that should instantly verify all legitimate card numbers.

Moving forward with an Employment Verification Program is a complex requirement that involves considerable preparation. Much of this preparation will require the creation new procedures and electronic immigration database platforms, and phasing out our current paper-based records system at USCIS. Many of these initiatives are already underway as a part of the USCIS Business Transformation Program, and we will continue to adapt our systems and enhance our capabilities ahead of any legislative reform action passed in Congress.

EMPLOYERS CAN REGISTER FOR THE BASIC PILOT EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION PROGRAM ONLINE OR CALL 202-272-8720

AUGUST 2006

“USCIS: Delivering on the Promise”

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USCIS: AMERICA'S IMMIGRATION SERVICE

ANSWERS ABOUT EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION

A CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF OF THE VERIFICATION DIVISION

Gerri Ratliff is the Chief of the USCIS Verification Division within the newly created National Security and Verification Directorate. Below, find her answers to frequently asked questions about the USCIS Employment Verification program.

Explain the electronic processes and data travel that accompanies each verification request?

After the person has been hired and the Form I-9 completed, the employer has 3 business days from hire to initiate an Employment Verification query using the required information taken from the employee's Form I-9 to perform the query. All queries first go against the Social Security Administration (SSA) database. If all information matches and the employee is a U.S. citizen, an immediate response of Employment Authorized is returned to the employer. If the information does not match the information contained in the SSA record, a Tentative Nonconfirmation response is sent to the employer.

If all information matches SSA record, but the employee is an alien, the query is automatically sent to USCIS for verification against the Verification Information System (VIS). If all information matches, an immediate response of Employment Authorized is returned to the employer. If the VIS database cannot immediately confirm the information, the query is electronically sent to an Immigration Status Verifier (ISV), located in Los Angeles, to search other systems in order to verify employment authorization. If the ISV cannot verify employment authorization, a response of Tentative Nonconfirmation is sent to the employer.

What happens when an employer receives a Tentative Nonconfirmation response from USCIS?

If an employee contests a USCIS Tentative Nonconfirmation response, the employer gives the employee a referral letter which provides instructions for calling a toll-free telephone number at USCIS to resolve any discrepancies in his or her record. The employee has 8 Federal Government workdays from the date of referral to contact USCIS via a toll-free telephone number staffed by USCIS Immigration Status Verifiers (ISV) in the Los Angeles Status Verification Unit. When the employee calls, he or she provides the ISV with the verification number and other information contained in the referral letter. If the ISV is unable to verify the employment authorization of the non-citizen based on the information furnished telephonically, in some cases, the ISV asks the employee to fax copies of their immigration document(s). Once the ISV is able to determine employment authorization status, a response is returned electronically to the employer. It is possible for cases to be continued if the ISV needs additional time to look for records; virtually all of these cases are cleared up within a workweek of the original 10-day period.

If the employee does not contact USCIS to resolve his or her case and 10 Federal Government workdays have passed since the date of referral, the system automatically provides a response of "USCIS No Show." The USCIS No Show response is considered a Final Nonconfirmation. If an employee *does not contest* either an SSA or USCIS Tentative Nonconfirmation response, it is then considered to be a Final Nonconfirmation, and the employer may terminate employment.

What has USCIS been doing to prepare for the expected increased capacity of a mandatory national employment eligibility system as proposed by Congress?

USCIS is already planning for the expansion of the program and looking at ways to minimize tentative nonconfirmations. Data timeliness and quality of the data are the most common delays in immediately providing employment eligibility status information. In an effort to decrease DHS Tentative Nonconfirmation responses, the Office of Verification has been working with other DHS offices to receive nightly downloads of information contained in USCIS' Image Storage and Retrieval System (ISRS) and the Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS) maintained by Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE). USCIS is also working with CBP to get additional TECS downloads of real-time airport and seaport arrivals information.

How easy is it to become an employer registered with USCIS for Employment Verification?

Employers who want to volunteer to participate in the Employment Eligibility Verification program can [register online](#). It takes approximately 10 minutes to register for the program. After completing the online registration process, the employer prints the Memorandum of Understanding and faxes the signed document to the USCIS SAVE Program for processing. Once the SAVE Program accepts the application, the Employer Contact Person receives an Email that contains their USER ID, a temporary password and the internet address for the system. The user must complete an online tutorial and pass a short test before being able to process new-hires through the Employment Verification system.

Q & A WITH DIRECTOR GONZÁLEZ

PARTICIPATES IN *ASK THE WHITE HOUSE* ONLINE CHAT

On July 24, USCIS Director Emilio González joined thousands of online participants from across the country for the Ask the White House online interactive forum. Here is a sample question and answer from the forum:

Geof, from McLean VA writes:

I was thrilled to see the notice that the premium processing program will be expanded. When will premium processing be available for I-140 applicants?

Director González:

I-140 Premium Processing will be rolled out in several stages. The first stage will involve what is known as the EB-3 category, which relates to what are known as "skilled workers, professionals, and other workers." USCIS expects to allow filing of EB-3 I-140 sometime in August. As stated in the notice that you read, USCIS will announce on its website, www.uscis.gov, the exact date premium processing will become available. We plan to announce additional expansions on the website later this year.

The [entire transcript of the forum with Director González](#) is available online, and [visit the Ask the White House archives](#) to read discussions with White House officials.

**DON'T WAIT
IN LINE...
GO ONLINE!!!**

[USCIS.gov](http://uscis.gov) features an evolving suite of Internet based services that decrease waiting times for customers. The [INFOPASS](#) Online appointment system, our 24-hour [National Customer Service Call Center](#), the ability to file and check the status of applications online using our [E-Filing Online Application Center](#), and other electronic media have improved our ability to both tackle the existing backlog of cases, while handling an increasing number of applicants.

NEWS YOU CAN USE...

FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

[USCIS Reaches H-1B Exemption Cap for Fiscal Year 2007, 7/28/06](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today that it has received enough H-1B petitions requesting "foreign workers who have earned a master's degree or higher from a U.S. institution of higher education" to meet the exemption limit of 20,000 established by Congress FY 2007.

[DHS Announces 18-Month Extension of Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\) for Nationals of Somalia, 7/27/06](#)

DHS announced an 18-month extension of TPS for nationals of Somalia until March 17, 2008. Under this extension, those who already have TPS are eligible to live and work in the United States for an additional 18 months while maintaining their status. A [Frequently Asked Question and Answer Fact Sheet](#) is also available.

[Public Notice: USCIS Notifies Clients of Case Transfers, 7/26/06](#)

Due to unusually high workload surges, the Vermont Service Center recently transferred nearly 5,000 Petitions for Nonimmigrant Workers (Form I-129) to the Texas Service Center. VSC also transferred approximately 22,000 Petitions for Alien Relatives (Form I-130) to the California Service Center. Customers should not be alarmed if they receive notices from the Texas or California Service Center about a case they initially mailed to VSC.

[Public Notice: El Salvadoran Employment Authorization Documents \(EADs\) Update, 6/30/06](#)

USCIS will publish a notice in the Federal Register July 3, 2006 alerting the public that Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) issued under the designation of El Salvador for TPS and bearing an expiration date of either July 5, 2006 or September 9, 2006 are automatically extended until March 9, 2007.

[USCIS Notifies Applicants of Additional Filing Changes Effective July 24, 2006, 6/30/06](#)

USCIS today announced changes to the filing procedure for employment-based applications for lawful permanent resident status. Starting July 24, all applicants filing an Application to Adjust Status or Register Permanent Residence (Form I-485) based on a pending or an approved Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker (Form I-140), also referred to as a "standalone filing," should mail that form directly to the Nebraska Service Center. A [Filing Changes Fact Sheet](#) is also available.



VISIT THE [OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS](#) FOR THE LATEST NEWS
AND INFORMATION FROM USCIS

PRESIDENT BUSH AND DIRECTOR GONZÁLEZ WELCOME NEW CITIZEN AMERICAN HEROES

USCIS HOSTS MILITARY NATURALIZATION AT WALTER REED



On July 24, 2006, President Bush attended a USCIS Naturalization Ceremony at Walter Reed Army Medical Center where three members of the U.S. Armed Forces, wounded while serving in Iraq, were naturalized as U.S. citizens.

A transcript of [President Bush's complete remarks](#) from the event at Walter Reed are available online.

Since September 11, 2001, more than 26,000 service members have been naturalized. During 2005, more than 6,000 military service members became citizens, including 1,006 service members sworn-in overseas during ceremonies in Afghanistan, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Spain, the United Kingdom, and in the Pacific aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk.

On July 1, 69 active-duty service members took the Oath of Allegiance and became American citizens during a special overseas military naturalization ceremony at the Logistic Support Area Anaconda, Balad, Iraq. This was the fifth trip USCIS officials have made to Iraq to naturalize military personnel. This year, ceremonies in Iraq and Afghanistan were part of the larger USCIS commemoration of the United States' 230 birthday on July 4 hosting more than 150 ceremonies for 18,000 men, women and children in the United States and members of the military serving in overseas locations.

Director González leads Specialist Sergio Lopez, 24, of Bowlingbrook, IL, left, Specialist Noe Santos-Dilone of Brooklyn, N.Y., center, and Private First Class Eduardo Leal-Cardenas of Los Angeles, right, in the Oath of Allegiance with President Bush



DIRECTOR GONZÁLEZ TESTIFIES BEFORE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

DISCUSSES CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS TO U.S. MILITARY

On July 11, Director Emilio Gonzalez testified before a special Senate Armed Services Committee field hearing in Miami regarding the contributions of immigrants to our Nation's armed forces.

Director Gonzalez offered numerous examples of heroic immigrant service members who have received the Medal of Honor and how USCIS is taking steps to ensure that the application process for immigrant service members is convenient, quick, and secure.

"I am committed to exhausting every effort to ensure that all military naturalization applications are processed expeditiously so that service members receive this honor on behalf of a grateful nation," Director Gonzalez said. "As a veteran, a husband, a parent, and the Director of USCIS, I am proud and extremely honored to serve this agency in supporting our military men and women and their families." [Director Gonzalez's full testimony](#) is available at uscis.gov.

USCIS: SECURING AMERICA'S PROMISE

OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

The newly launched [Outstanding American by Choice](#) initiative recognizes the outstanding achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to their 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.



Dr. Guillermo Linares
Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
New York, New York

Dr. Guillermo Linares immigrated to the United States in 1966. Today he serves as commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs for New York City. As commissioner, he works to ensure immigrants know how to access city services and meets with civic, religious, and business leaders to discuss the needs of immigrant communities. His advocacy on behalf of workers, immigrants, and families started 30 years ago when he was a school teacher. In 1991, Dr. Linares made history by becoming the first Dominican-American elected to public office in the United States when he won a New York City Council race. As a member of the Council, he advocated for education, health services, and affordable housing. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from City College and a professional diploma in administration and supervision from Fordham University. He recently achieved his doctorate in education from Teachers College at Columbia University.



Dr. Marion P. Primomo
Physician, Hospice and Palliative Medicine
San Antonio, Texas

Dr. Marion P. Primomo is a physician in Hospice and Palliative Medicine, and a professor in the Department of Family Practice at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA). Born in Germany, Dr. Primomo obtained her medical degree at Loyola University in Chicago. It was at Loyola that she met and married her classmate, Dr. John Primomo. In 1978, she became medical director of San Antonio's first hospice at St. Benedict's facility. Today more than 1,000 patients a day are served by San Antonio's 28 hospices, five of which named Dr. Primomo as their medical director. Dr. Primomo has been recognized internationally for her work and is a founding member of the Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.



Dr. Eduardo J. Padrón
President, Miami Dade College
Miami, Florida

Dr. Eduardo J. Padrón came to the United States from Cuba at the age of 15 and transformed his life through his dedication to learning. He attended public high school in Miami, and began his college studies at Miami Dade College. Today, Dr. Padrón is president of Miami Dade College, the nation's largest institution of higher education. He serves as chief administrative and academic officer, responsible for the affairs of six campuses and several outreach centers enrolling more than 163,000 students.

Deeply involved in the South Florida academic community, Dr. Padrón has spent more than 30 years championing higher education opportunity. His work has been recognized by a series of U.S. Presidents. Among his national involvements, he has served on the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and the boards of directors of The College Board, American Association of Colleges and Universities, American Council on Education, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.



FACES OF AMERICA

NEW CITIZENS... UNIQUE STORIES

JUAN GONZALES - MEXICO



Juan Gonzales takes the Oath of Allegiance and receives his Certificate of Naturalization

Two years ago, Juan Gonzales, then 24, noticed that after the smallest amount of exertion, he'd get dizzy and feel weak. When the symptoms worsened, he saw a few doctors in Merced, his Central Valley home. But none of them were able to diagnose him.

So he went to Stanford University Hospital in the San Francisco Bay Area for help. There, Gonzalez was told his life expectancy was just a few weeks.

"One doctor said, 'You could die tomorrow,'" he recalls.

But thanks to life-saving surgery last August that replaced his heart and both lungs, the 26-year-old was strong enough to stand and take his oath at Fresno's Fashion Fair Mall on June 14. The son of a father who received amnesty, Gonzalez came to the United States from Mexico in 1991. Surgeons said that two holes in his heart, probably there since birth, had caused pulmonary hypertension, leading to the three-organ transplant.

The 8-hour surgery had him living near the famed Palo Alto hospital for 6 months while he recovered. Then, Gonzalez and his wife moved in with his parents as a money-saving tactic. The couple has their own place to live now.

Thanks to lots of 2-hour workouts at the gym, Gonzalez will soon take the test for a mail-carrier job with the U.S. Postal Service. It's a job he wouldn't have qualified for before being naturalized, and never could have done without the surgery.



FIND YOUR FAMILY'S STORY

HOW USCIS IMMIGRATION HISTORY ARCHIVES CAN HELP

Millions of Americans can trace their family history to an immigrant. Finding a record to reveal where that immigrant came from, or when and where they first stepped foot on American soil, is often a long and frustrating task. USCIS records may help in this search, as they are the records of late 19th and 20th century immigration to the United States.

Immigration arrival records are the official record of an immigrant's admission to the United States. Many genealogists use these files to begin a family history inquiry. These official records took different forms depending on date and location. Most arrivals through seaports were kept on big sheets called [Ship Passenger Manifests](#). [Land Border Arrival Records](#) from entries across the Northern Border since 1895 and the Southern Border since 1908 are also archived. The Immigration Act of 1924 established immigration quotas according to the national origins system, and from July 1, 1924, all aliens arriving in the United States were required to present a visa. These [Visa Files](#), and other [Alien Registration Records](#) up to 1944 are available from USCIS and can be obtained through a [Freedom of Information \(FOIA\) / Privacy Act](#) request.

While most historical immigration records are open to the public at the [National Archives](#), more recent records remain with DHS and are subject to the FOIA process. For more information, visit [USCIS History, Genealogy and Education](#). Check future issues of USCIS Today regarding new USCIS programs to assist the public with genealogical research.



Immigrants arriving by ship, 1912

[SHARE YOUR STORY: CONTACT USCIS](#)



“HOW DO I...?”
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
AT USCIS

HOW DO I...COMPLETE FORM I-9 EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION?

All U.S. employers are required by law to verify the employment eligibility of all their employees regardless of the immigration status. Employers who hire or continue to employ individuals knowing that they are not authorized to be employed in the United States may face civil and criminal penalties. [Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification](#), must be completed on behalf of every employee, including U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and temporary foreign workers, to evidence the employer’s compliance with the law and the employee’s work authorization. Through the Form I-9 verification process, employers ensure that employees possess proper authorization to work in the United States and that hiring practices do not unlawfully discriminate based on immigration status.

Who is responsible for completing the different sections of the I-9?

The employee is obligated to complete Section 1, Employee Information and Verification, of the Form I-9 at the time of hire. The employer is obligated, after physically examining the documents presented by the employee, to complete Section 2, Employer Review and Verification, and Section 3, Updating and Reverification (if applicable), of the Form I-9.

When should Section 1 be completed?

Section 1 should be completed and signed by every newly hired employee (an employee who has accepted the position) on or before the first date of employment, regardless of his or her immigration status. The employee must attest that he or she is a U.S. citizen, lawful permanent resident, or is otherwise authorized to work for the employer in the United States. The employee must present to the employer documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility in accordance with the special instructions regarding the most current list of acceptable documents located at uscis.gov.

The “How Do I...?” Section of USCIS Today contains answers to frequently asked questions from USCIS customers. Additional information and more answers are available in English and Spanish on the [How Do I...?](#) section of uscis.gov.

When should Section 2 be completed?

Section 2 of the Form I-9 must be completed and signed by the employer within 3 business days of hire, whether he or she employs thousands of employees or only one. If the employment relationship will last less than 3 days, then the employer must verify the documentation on the date of hire.

When should Section 3 be completed?

Employers should complete Section 3 of the Form I-9 when updating and re-verifying the employment authorization of an employee whose previous valid authorization has expired. Section 3 is inapplicable to employees who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Section 3 should only be completed when the employee denotes that he or she is an alien authorized to work until a specified date in Section 1 of the Form I-9.

What if an employee has temporary work authorization?

An employee who has been issued temporary work authorization must produce proof of continued work authorization before the date of expiration.

How do I know if a document is genuine or false?

An employer is not required to know with absolute certainty whether a document is genuine or false. The law merely requires that an employer examine the original of the document (not a photocopy) and make a good faith determination that the document:

- Appears to relate to the employee,
- Appears to be genuine, and
- Is listed as an acceptable document on the back of the I-9.

Please note that the rejection of a document that later proves to be genuine could result in a violation of the anti-discrimination provisions of immigration law.

How can I get more information about the Form I-9?

The M-274, Employer Handbook, contains the instructions for completing the Form I-9. Additional [Employer Information materials](#), the Form I-9, and the M-274 handbook can be downloaded from our website at uscis.gov.

USCIS SERVICE CENTERS CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF PERFORMANCE

On Friday, July 14, USCIS Director Emilio González and U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy gathered at the Vermont Service Center in St. Albans with other USCIS leaders, past and present, to commemorate the achievements of the first 25 years of the Vermont, Texas, Nebraska, and California Service Centers.

What began 25 years ago with a handful of employees in the basement of a post office in northern Vermont is now a major part of how U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) efficiently and securely provides immigration benefits to millions of customers every year.

Today the four USCIS Service Centers employ more than 5,000 government and contract staff. Created to carry out work not requiring face-to-face interaction with the public, the USCIS Service Centers now receive, process, and adjudicate more than 70 percent of the six to eight million petitions and applications received by USCIS from all 50 states and countries around the world. During FY 2005 the 5.7 million cases handled by the four service centers generated nearly \$1.3 billion in fees.

One of the four USCIS Service Centers is often the first stop for applications and petitions filed by those seeking immigration benefits. Often the first to examine an application or petition for immigration benefits, the officers of the USCIS Service Centers are on the front of line of detecting fraud and uncovering those who might pose risks to national security.

The idea of the service centers was first conceived in the late 1970s by two legacy U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) managers during a hunting trip in northeastern Vermont. The concept was to relieve overburdened district offices by transferring work not needing face-to-face interviews with applicants to other locations. This allowed the district offices to concentrate on applications for benefits that require interviews, such as citizenship and legal permanent residency. In 1981, INS opened the first service center with eight employees in St. Albans. Soon, three more centers, in Laguna Niguel, Dallas, and Lincoln, also opened their doors.

During the next 25 years the concept of moving non-interview work away from the district offices to the service centers would grow and expand, transforming how first INS, and later USCIS, would process and deliver immigration benefits. With new initiatives and legislation, the service centers began handling more types of immigration applications and petitions with increased efficiency.

To standardize the processing of specialized and sensitive immigration benefits, the adjudication of these applications is often centralized to a USCIS Service Center. As a result, the officers at the centers develop unique knowledge and skills found virtually nowhere else in the Federal Government.



Director González, Deputy Director Scharfen and Sen. Patrick Leahy



Gil Tabor, the founder and first director of the Vermont Service Center



Director González and VSC Director Paul Novak

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UPCOMING EVENTS, PRESS RELEASES AND IMMIGRATION POLICY NEWS

REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Background: Tom is from Nashville, Tennessee and moved to Houston, Texas in May 1998 as a District Adjudications Officer. In September 2004, Tom started work as a Fraud Officer with the Fraud Detection and National Security Unit based out of the Dallas District Office. Gladys started as an Applications Clerk in the Dallas District Office in August 1996. On August 1998, she became a District Adjudications Officer with the Houston District Office. The Hanvey's were married on April 26, 2003, and Gladys transferred back to the Dallas District Office in September 2004.



Which of your contributions to USCIS are you most proud of?

Tom: I am proud to work with FDNS, and it's great to see how it is growing. I am glad to see there is a program taking action against fraud within USCIS. FDNS has had a positive impact with the Service.

Gladys: I have worked with the Service for 10 years and am proud of the direction the Service is going. The agency has grown and continues to have encouraging results providing accurate and timely service to the public. Working as an adjudications officer for the past 10 years is what I am most proud of.

Name: Tom and Gladys Hanvey
Position: FDNS Officer and District Adjudications Officer
Location: Dallas District Office

What's the most memorable moment you've experienced at USCIS?

Tom: When I was the hearing officer at the San Jacinto Monument for a naturalization ceremony in Houston.

Gladys: When I attend the naturalization ceremonies, it's definitely a memorable moment. It is great to see how proud people are when they become citizens. All of their hard work and effort it takes, and they do not take it for granted. As a United States citizen, this makes me appreciate that I was born in the United States.

How has USCIS changed since March 2003?

Tom: I am glad to see a higher emphasis placed on national security and public safety checks for the applicants. When I started with the Service, there was much more emphasis placed on numbers rather than the quality of the people to whom we grant benefits.

Gladys: I have worked with the Service for almost 10 years and am proud to see the direction the Service is going, working on reducing backlog and the importance the Service is taking in eliminating it all together.

How do you balance working as a husband/wife team? And how does that reflect at home?

Tom: We each spend alternate Fridays with our daughter thanks to the alternate work schedule. We take turns with different chores around the house since we both work. Also, her parents live close by and that helps.

Gladys: It is nice to discuss your workday with someone who understands the Service. We try not to go overboard when chatting about work. At home it's all about our family and spending time with our daughter. We are a great support system for one another.

VISIT [USAJOBS ONLINE](#) FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OPENINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT USCIS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT USCIS OCOMM 202.272.1200