



US Immigration Newsletter

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A Question of Naturalization



Although the Trump Administration's hard-line immigration policies have significantly impacted many families across the country, immigrants across the country continue to apply for US citizenship.

Every year, around 700,000 to 750,000 of these applicants are naturalized in judicial and administrative ceremonies across the country, with a large portion of these events scheduled around the 4th of July. This year, more than 14,000 immigrants were granted citizenship in UCIS Independence Day ceremonies held nationwide, bringing the total of naturalizations in 2018 to 163,000 (a 53% increase over the previous year.)

The fact that so many immigrants are willing to go through the rigorous citizenship tests and character assessments required for this process is a testament to the esteem that the United States still holds around the world. Indeed, the UCIS has recently taken steps to help permanent residents transition to citizenship. This month, the government agency announced that they would be offering \$10 million in grants to pro-immigrant organizations that offered citizenship preparation services and English-language education for low-income immigrants that were seeking naturalization.

Unfortunately, these initiatives are far from the norm. In a disconcerting move, the DHS recently announced that it plans to dedicate a massive \$200 million towards investigating possible cases of fraudulent citizenship. A new taskforce would be responsible for examining instances where individuals avoided deportation or misrepresented their identity, relationship status, or

criminal history in an effort to gain citizenship. Citizens that are found guilty of these crimes may face denaturalization and deportation under the new policy.

Naturalized immigrants are a vital driver for economic growth and innovation within the country. One hopes that the Trump Administration will recognize this sooner rather than later and moves to welcome these individuals rather than casting doubt over their right to live and work freely as American citizens.

Why Is The U.S. Army Discharging MAVNI Recruits?



A long-standing US citizenship program intended to attract immigrants with critical medical or language skills to the armed forces has come under scrutiny recently, after 40 foreign-born recruits were booted from the program without any prior warning.

Prospective recruits who enter the service through the so-called MAVNI (Military Accessions Vital to National Interest) program are required to hold legal status in the United States (student visa, H1B-visa etc.) These individuals are also subjected to extensive background screenings before they can start basic training at which point they become eligible for citizenship.

Although MAVNI was temporarily suspended under the Obama administration, 1000 recruits remained in the system waiting assignment. The recent discharges have all come from amongst this number, and many of these removals have come with scant explanation behind them.

According to military insiders, this recent spate of ejections may be an indicator of a larger crackdown on immigrants in the army.

Calls For Universities to Cut Ties With ICE

As the controversies surrounding the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agency continue to grow, University watchdog groups and pro-immigration organizations are calling on higher education providers to cut ties with the group.

Universities that are currently partnered with the LEO agency include John Hopkins University, which receives over \$1.6 million in annual funding from ICE through six separate contracts, and Northeastern University, which has received over \$6 million in ICE funding across 2018.



While university administrators claim that the funds are solely allocated at the discretion of faculty members who use the grants for research purposes, critics say that board members need to more transparent about how the money is being used and how critical they really are to their organizations. Meanwhile, concerned student groups are calling on these institutions to cancel all existing contracts altogether.