

Naturalization and Oath Ceremony Protection Act

The *Naturalization and Oath Ceremony Protection Act* amends the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to guarantee that individuals whose naturalization applications have been approved are permitted to complete the final steps of the naturalization process—attendance at a naturalization ceremony, administration of the oath of allegiance, and receipt of a certificate of naturalization—except in narrowly defined circumstances based on individualized findings.

Two weeks ago, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services abruptly canceled naturalization and oath ceremonies for citizenship applicants from 19 so-called high-risk countries. In Boston, the Trump administration denied four approved naturalization applicants their scheduled oath ceremonies. This kind of anti-immigrant, racist, and xenophobic approach to the naturalization process undermines its integrity, predictability, and fairness, and leaves approved applicants in legal limbo after completing all substantive requirements for citizenship.

The bill, which is supported by [Project Citizenship](#):

Creates a new section 337A of the INA that guarantees completion of naturalization for applicants whose applications have been approved, including the right to: (1) appear at a scheduled naturalization ceremony; (2) take the oath of allegiance; and (3) receive a certificate of naturalization.

Limits exclusions from ceremonies only to cases where, after approval and before the oath, the Department of Homeland Security makes an individualized determination that the applicant is statutorily ineligible or procured approval through fraud or willful misrepresentation.

Requires procedural protections, including (1) written notice stating the specific factual and legal basis for exclusion; (2) advance notice (generally at least 10 days before the ceremony); (3) an opportunity for the applicant to respond in writing; and (4) supervisory review by an official not involved in the original adjudication.

Prohibits categorical or discriminatory exclusions, including those based on nationality, country of origin, place of birth, or generalized policies or risk designations not tied to individualized adjudication.

Allows a narrow emergency postponement (up to 30 days) only in extraordinary cases involving a specific and credible national security threat, with written individualized findings.

Provides for judicial review and enforcement, including (1) treating unlawful failure to administer the oath as agency action unlawfully withheld; (2) authorizing mandamus relief; (3) allowing prevailing applicants to recover attorneys' fees and costs; and (4) requiring prompt rescheduling of ceremonies after a court order.

Bars secret or informal policies, requiring any DHS policy affecting naturalization ceremonies to be publicly issued in the Federal Register and consistent with the statute, with no waiver by regulation or executive directive.