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DHS to Welcome More Than 32,000 New Citizens During Annual Constitution Day and Citizenship Day Celebration

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WASHINGTON—The Department of Homeland Security will welcome more than 32,000 new citizens during 158 naturalization ceremonies from Sept. 14-22 in recognition of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day. As part of this celebration, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano will participate in a special naturalization ceremony at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Alejandro Mayorkas will officiate a children's citizenship ceremony in Los Angeles.

"There is no better time than Constitution Week to highlight the rights, responsibilities and importance of U.S. citizenship, and recognize the many contributions immigrants have made to this great nation," said Secretary Napolitano. "These naturalization ceremonies celebrate our longstanding tradition of welcoming immigrants who come here from across the world, to seek a better life for themselves and their families, and to contribute to our country."

On Sept. 17, Secretary Napolitano will preside over a special naturalization ceremony for 225 candidates at the National Archives, home of the U.S. Constitution, in honor of the 225th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.

"Each year we recognize Constitution Day and Citizenship Day to commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution and to reflect on what it means to be a U.S. citizen," said Director Mayorkas. "For more than two centuries, immigrants have come to these shores because they believe that America is a land of opportunity. By coming, they enrich our way of life and renew our pledge to democracy."

In Los Angeles, Director Mayorkas will join Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa on Sept. 19 for a news conference to introduce "citizenship corners" – local hubs for citizenship information – in all 73 City of Los Angeles public libraries. The news conference will be followed by a citizenship ceremony for 50 children at the Los Angeles Central Library.

Other highlights of this year's celebration include Sept. 17 ceremonies at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, the Harry S. Truman Library & Museum in Independence, Mo., and Point Reyes National Seashore in Point Reyes, Calif.; a Sept. 20 ceremony at Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace; and a Sept. 21 ceremony at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum in Little Rock, Ark.

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day is celebrated on Sept. 17 in remembrance of the signing of the Constitution in 1787. Since 1952, Citizenship Day has been celebrated in conjunction with Constitution Day. To view a list of 2012 Constitution Day and Citizenship Day naturalization ceremonies, visit www.uscis.gov/news.

For more information, please visit www.dhs.gov or www.uscis.gov.

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