

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

In the Matter of the  
Naturalization and Granting of  
United States Citizenship to:

Casper, Wyoming  
January 6, 2025  
3:40 p.m.

MISCHELL QUIJANO TIONGSON,  
TRIINU JENAS HANSEN, TOMASZ  
DZIEDZIC, MITKA DIGON, ANGEL  
DANIEL COTO ZUNIGA, BERNARDINA  
CURIEL DE DALE, TATIANA ANDREA  
NAVARRO GARCIA, IRINA IVSHINA,  
VICTOR DANIEL ESTRADA, MANUEL  
RAMOS, EDUARDO BALLARAN GAPER,  
THAIS MATHILDE SCOTT HUMPHREYS,  
AILING DENG, XINER LUO,  
FRANCESCA ROMO, MARIA DAISYLYN  
VIRAY GAPER, ALBERTO MELENDEZ  
RODRIGUEZ, ALDA MARIA JULIANA  
SEGRS, PATRICIA DELALI AK AKPI,  
JULIANA TERESA TODD, KARINA  
RIVERA QUEZADA,

Ewing T. Kerr  
Federal Courthouse

Petitioners.

TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING ON PETITIONS FOR  
UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

BEFORE THE HONORABLE SCOTT W. SKAVDAHL  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

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transcript produced with computer-aided transcription.*

1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:40 p.m., January 6, 2025.)

2 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

3 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to  
4 the Ewing T. Kerr Federal Courthouse. Given the nature of  
5 this occasion, I will suspend all rules on cameras and  
6 recording devices. It is a tradition at the beginning of  
7 these naturalization ceremonies to recognize those families  
8 and citizens of those families -- citizens who have paid the  
9 ultimate price in defending what so many in this world seek,  
10 the freedom and benefits of becoming a United States citizen.

11 As of this morning, 7,088 American men and women have  
12 been killed in action while involved in military operations in  
13 the Middle East. In addition, 53,554 United States military  
14 personnel have been wounded in action during these military  
15 operations.

16 Let us take a minute of silence and recognize these  
17 American heroes and their families, whose sacrifice cannot be  
18 measured and loss will never be recovered.

19 (Moment of silence.)

20 The United States District Court for the District of  
21 Wyoming is in special session for the naturalization of  
22 foreign nationals to be United States citizens. It is with  
23 great honor, pride, and privilege that I am able to conduct  
24 today's ceremony naturalizing 21 new United States citizens  
25 from 12 different countries around the world.

1           The Federal District Court of Wyoming, including  
2 Judges Johnson, Freudenthal, Rankin, Klosterman, and Hambrick,  
3 extend their congratulations to you and your family and  
4 friends.

5           I would ask at this time the Clerk of Court to make a  
6 roll call of the prospective applicants for U.S. citizenship,  
7 and if you could please raise your hand when your name is  
8 called.

9           THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Mischell Quijano Tiongson,  
10 Triinu Jenas Hansen, Tomasz Dziedzic, Mitka Digon, Angel  
11 Daniel Coto Zuniga, Bernardina Curriel De Dale, Tatiana Andrea  
12 Navarro Garcia, Irina Ivshina, Victor Daniel Estrada, Manuel  
13 Ramos, Eduardo Ballaran Gaper, Thais Mathilde Scott Humphreys,  
14 Ailing Deng, Xiner Luo, Francesca Romo, Maria Daisylyn Viray  
15 Gaper, Alberto Melendez Rodriguez, Alda Maria Juliana Segers,  
16 Patricia Delali Akpi, Juliana Teresa Todd, and Karina Rivera  
17 Quezada.

18           THE COURT: All right. I would note that we have all  
19 21, and I am glad I did not have to pronounce those names.

20           One of the most fundamental acts that we do as  
21 citizens is pledge our allegiance to the flag of the United  
22 States. I would ask Feier Luo, who I understand is a sister  
23 to Xiner Luo, to come forward and lead us in the Pledge of  
24 Allegiance; and then we'll remain standing for "The  
25 Star-Spangled Banner." If we could please have the posting of

1 the colors of the flag.

2 (Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

3 (Singing "The Star-Spangled Banner.")

4 THE COURT: Thank you, Colonel, and thank you to the  
5 Natrona County ROTC. Please have a seat.

6 At this time I would ask the Clerk of Court to play  
7 the President's video, please.

8 (Message from the President.)

9 THE COURT: At this time I would recognize  
10 Mr. Kubichek on behalf of the United States Attorney General,  
11 Merrick Garland, for presentation of a petition.

12 Mr. Kubichek, it's good to see you.

13 MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor. May it please  
14 the Court.

15 THE COURT: Counsel.

16 MR. KUBICHEK: Before the Court today are individuals  
17 here for a hearing on their petitions for naturalization.  
18 Each of these prospective citizens has successfully completed  
19 all of the steps necessary for eligibility for United States  
20 citizenship.

21 Moreover, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration  
22 Service has completed its processes with respect to each of  
23 these individuals, including the necessary background  
24 investigations. Having successfully negotiated all of those  
25 hurdles, we are advised that each of them is well qualified to

1 admit -- to be admitted to citizenship.

2 Therefore, Your Honor, the United States hereby moves  
3 the Court to admit each of these individuals to United States  
4 citizenship upon their taking of the required oath.

5 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

6 MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: On the petition of the United States, the  
8 Court would find that each applicant identified has satisfied  
9 the legal requirements to become a citizen of the United  
10 States and therefore will grant the petition and enter an  
11 order allowing these petitioners to become citizens of the  
12 United States subject to the taking of their oath.

13 And our soon-to-be newest United States citizens, if  
14 you would please stand and face me at this time and raise your  
15 right hand and repeat after me.

16 Those of you who wish to get a better picture, you're  
17 free to relocate if you wish.

18 I, state your name --

19 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: I, (stating names) --

20 THE COURT: -- hereby declare, on oath --

21 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- hereby declare, on oath --

22 THE COURT: -- that I absolutely and entirely --

23 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- that I absolutely and  
24 entirely --

25 THE COURT: -- renounce and abjure --

1 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- renounce and abjure --

2 THE COURT: -- all allegiance and fidelity --

3 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- all allegiance and

4 fidelity --

5 THE COURT: -- to any foreign prince or potentate --

6 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- to any foreign prince or

7 potentate --

8 THE COURT: -- state or sovereignty --

9 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- state or sovereignty --

10 THE COURT: -- of whom or which --

11 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- of whom or which --

12 THE COURT: -- I have heretofore been --

13 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- I have heretofore been --

14 THE COURT: -- a subject or citizen;

15 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- a subject or citizen;

16 THE COURT: That I will support and defend --

17 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: That I will support and

18 defend --

19 THE COURT: -- the Constitution and laws --

20 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- the Constitution and

21 laws --

22 THE COURT: -- of the United States of America --

23 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: - of the United States of

24 America --

25 THE COURT: -- against all enemies --

1 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- against all enemies --

2 THE COURT: -- foreign and domestic;

3 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- foreign and domestic;

4 THE COURT: That I will bear true faith --

5 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: That I will bear true faith --

6 THE COURT: -- and allegiance to the same;

7 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- and allegiance to the same;

8 THE COURT: That I will bear arms --

9 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: That I will bear arms --

10 THE COURT: -- on behalf of the United States --

11 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- on behalf of the United  
12 States --

13 THE COURT: -- when required by law.

14 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- when required by law.

15 THE COURT: I take this obligation freely --

16 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: I take this obligation  
17 freely --

18 THE COURT: -- without any mental reservation --

19 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- without any mental  
20 reservation --

21 THE COURT: -- or purpose of evasion.

22 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- or purpose of evasion.

23 THE COURT: So help me God.

24 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: So help me God.

25 THE COURT: Congratulations to our newest citizens.

1 (Applause.)

2 THE COURT: We'll go ahead and present the  
3 certificates of citizenship.

4 (Presentation of certificates.)

5 THE COURT: Go ahead. Please be seated.

6 I try to hand those out without licking my fingers.  
7 Because COVID and everything else, I figured . . . So I  
8 apologize. My fingers aren't as sensitive as they used to be.

9 At this time I'm going to turn to the various  
10 patriotic organizations that are present here today. This  
11 country was founded based upon people sacrificing not only for  
12 themselves but for the benefit of their fellow United States  
13 citizens and American lives and their wealth to provide us  
14 with the freedoms that we enjoy today.

15 That began as early as the Daughters of the American  
16 Revolution, and I would recognize at this time the various  
17 members of the Daughters of the American Revolution that are  
18 with us today: Ms. Trumbull, Ms. Wilson, Ms. Wayte, and  
19 Ms. Broumley.

20 MS. TRUMBULL: Hello, my fellow Americans. I am  
21 Shelly Trumbull, and I am the chair for the Fort Caspar  
22 Chapter of the DAR, Daughters of the American Revolution. We  
23 are a women's service organization focusing on historic  
24 preservation, education, and patriotism. I take great pride  
25 in being an American citizen, knowing that my ancestors fought

1 for the many rights we are guaranteed today.

2 My deep Wyoming roots are also very important to me.  
3 You are each receiving a lapel pin featuring an American flag  
4 and a Wyoming flag to commemorate your dedication of becoming  
5 citizens and being naturalized in the great state of Wyoming.

6 I commend you each on your journey to getting to this  
7 monumental day. It is an honor to welcome you on behalf of my  
8 chapter. Congratulations.

9 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Trumbull.

10 Thank you, ladies.

11 I would also, if I haven't, recognize the U.S.  
12 Daughters of 1812 and, I believe, Ms. Haines.

13 MS. HAINES: And Ms. Broumley.

14 THE COURT: And Ms. Broumley.

15 MS. HAINES: Hi, I'm Susan Haines; this is Robin  
16 Broumley. We're here today representing USD 1812, Daughters  
17 of 1812, the Wyoming state society.

18 The Daughters of 1812 are descendants of proven  
19 patriots who served during the War of 1812, which happened  
20 about 30 years after the Revolutionary War and was kind of an  
21 attempt to make sure that the agreements that were made at the  
22 end of the Revolutionary War were still being honored between  
23 Britain and the United States.

24 So many of us are members of both Daughters of --  
25 DAR. Sorry. Different hat. Many of us are members of DAR as

1 well as the USD 1812 because these father-and-son groups both  
2 served to defend our country. So welcome, and  
3 congratulations.

4 THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Haines and  
5 Ms. Broumley.

6 And trying to go in chronographical order in some  
7 ways, the next group I would recognize is the American Legion:  
8 Ms. Seems, Commander seems, and Dean Welch.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, if I may, it would be,  
10 actually, the Natrona County Veteran Assembly Council and then  
11 the American Legion as we go down to groups.

12 THE COURT: All right. I would recognize you,  
13 Mr. Laurenz, and Mr. Winzenried and Mr. Blackford and  
14 Mr. Williams.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: We got a whole bunch of us here.  
16 Thank you so much.

17 Detail in honor of our commander in chief and His  
18 Honor. Present arms.

19 Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, your military is  
20 your military. You pay for them. You're the boss. And these  
21 young men have been all over this world to keep us here and to  
22 bring us to what you got today. So when we say thank you for  
23 your service, we really mean it to these young men and women,  
24 because some of their friends are still there and will never  
25 come home. So we say thank you. Thank you for choosing us,

1 first of all.

2 The first to be recognized is the American Legion.  
3 Commander Dean or --

4 MR. WELCH: My name is Dean Welch. I'm the Post 2  
5 adjutant, and today we have our Post Commander, Larry Seems;  
6 Post Vice Commander, Larry Winzenried; and we have some gifts  
7 that we'd like to give to the new citizens.

8 The American Legion was enacted in 1919. We're a  
9 veteran's organization that came home from World War I,  
10 realized that there wasn't any real support for the American  
11 veteran, so they decided they needed to organize on their own.

12 So Post 2 was the second post in the state of  
13 Wyoming, chartered in 1919. So we've been here for a while.  
14 We're here to help out our veterans and their families, to  
15 support our communities, promote Americanism, and to  
16 congratulate you all for such a hard job that you just went  
17 through.

18 So congratulations from the American Legion, and the  
19 only thing veterans ask of you to be citizens is that you be  
20 proud to represent and fight for. Thank you.

21 THE COURT: Thank you.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: The next people I'd like to introduce  
23 to you are very, very special to us because they have a duty  
24 that is probably one of the greatest to have but yet one of  
25 the hardest to have, the Natrona County Veterans Council, and

1 they will explain to you what they do.

2 Mr. President.

3 MR. LAURENZ: Yes. My name is Hank Laurenz. I'm the  
4 president of the Natrona County Veterans Council. The Council  
5 was formed to basically become the ID of all the veterans  
6 groups, to help veterans, and also to perform honor details  
7 for veterans that have passed away. So we find it an honor to  
8 do that.

9 Anyway, with that, we find it an honor to take and  
10 accomplish the last rights, or the veterans honors, when our  
11 veterans finally pass away. This is my vice commander -- what  
12 was your name? Oh, yeah. I'm in one of those things today --  
13 Ernie Blackford, and he'll be handing out some pins right now  
14 of the American flag.

15 And with that, that's where we find the greatest  
16 honor is serving our fellow vets. And we had one  
17 administrative honor detail one day that said veterans and  
18 American servicemen have served their country and continue to  
19 serve their fellow veterans and country even after they're out  
20 of the service.

21 I would like to congratulate you all on your endeavor  
22 and your culmination of being an American citizen, and have a  
23 good day. Thank you.

24 THE COURT: Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

1 THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen.

2 I would also recognize the Disabled American Veterans  
3 and Mr. Greer and Mr. Williams.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. This is probably one of the most  
5 unique group of people that we have is the Disabled American  
6 Veterans. Among them of all the organizations are probably  
7 the most highly decorated, and there's a reason for it because  
8 they brought most of the purple hearts.

9 I'm sorry. You'd think after 59 years of being  
10 married to the same woman I could follow instructions. I'm  
11 learning. Please forgive me.

12 So with that said, I'm going to give you to the boss,  
13 the commander, state of Wyoming Disabled American Veterans.

14 MR. GREER: Thank you. My name is Darren Greer. I'm  
15 the chapter commander here in Casper, and I'm the state  
16 commander of the Disabled American Veterans for the state of  
17 Wyoming.

18 As Mr. Williams stated, we are the unfortunate -- or  
19 we're unfortunate enough to be -- have the criteria of being  
20 disabled in order to join this organization. However, I speak  
21 for a lot of veterans, hopefully most if not all veterans, as  
22 Mr. Welch said earlier, you now are part of the reason that it  
23 was our pleasure to serve. Be in the future that type of  
24 person that your children or your grandchildren would be  
25 honored to serve.

1           I personally got a lot more out of the military and  
2 being a veteran than I ever put into it. But now it is our  
3 opportunity to be able to give back and serve those veterans,  
4 and I can't really add anything more than what has already  
5 been said by these fine gentlemen here. Thank you.

6           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Greer.

7           MR. WILLIAMS: There's one organization that isn't  
8 here today, and they're called the Veterans of Foreign War,  
9 and that's exactly what it means. They are veterans of  
10 foreign wars. They served what we call "boots on ground" in  
11 foreign countries. And they got tied up today, but every one  
12 of them -- I'm not talking on the mic.

13           The Veterans of Foreign War are veterans who have  
14 served in foreign countries. And unfortunately, they got tied  
15 up today and couldn't make it, their representative. And all  
16 those folks are honorably discharged and people who have  
17 fought in foreign countries to keep us free, to keep the world  
18 free.

19           Your Honor, this concludes that program with your  
20 military. Thank you so much.

21           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Williams, and thank you,  
22 veterans, and those entities representing those families and  
23 veterans and individuals that have done so much to allow us to  
24 enjoy the freedoms that we have today.

25           Let me turn to a couple other important entities in

1 the United States system. A lot of you are entrepreneurs, and  
2 one of the entities that is involved in that is the Small  
3 Business Administration. And I believe Ms. Amy Lea is here  
4 today.

5 Ms. Lea.

6 MS. LEA: Thank you, Your Honor. I really appreciate  
7 the opportunity.

8 Welcome to all of you. I have some resources that  
9 I'll be passing around; but as citizens, you are entitled to  
10 know and participate in all the resources of the SBA, Small  
11 Business Administration. We're a federal agency that helps  
12 small businesses start, grow, expand, and recover from  
13 disasters. And we have access to capital if you need help  
14 getting funding to start a business or are interested in doing  
15 government contracting. All of those things our office can  
16 help you with. So I'll pass these out.

17 Thank you.

18 THE COURT: Thank you.

19 I've discovered that 21 new U.S. citizens is about  
20 the max that we can fit in here and still navigate.

21 I had them turn down the heat a little bit because I  
22 anticipated with that many people in the courtroom we might  
23 get a little warm. I didn't realize how quickly the heat  
24 could change in here.

25 Thank you, Ms. Lea.

1           Another entity that is here today is the Natrona  
2 County 4H; and I would recognize Jessica Bennett, Judy  
3 Bennett, Tyler Bennett, and Joshua Bliss.

4           MR. BLISS: Thank you, Your Honor. It's an honor to  
5 be here. We were here a few months ago to welcome, and now we  
6 have 21 citizens to welcome again.

7           I am Joshua Bliss. I am the 4H youth development  
8 educator. And in Natrona County 4H, our goal truly is  
9 developing amazing humans, but we start with the mini version.

10          What I always say is the how we do that. The how is  
11 we take caring, engaging adults, and we give them the  
12 responsibility of guiding youth. You, as you've just become  
13 new citizens of this country, you all have a past. You all  
14 have a lot of diversity in your lives.

15          And what I'd like to do is invite you to think about  
16 the youth of this country. Invest in them. Use your unique  
17 experiences to help them understand their own lives.

18          But I'm going to introduce Judy Bennett. She is one  
19 of our 4H leaders. She has spearheaded this project to be  
20 sure that we're always here to welcome new citizens into the  
21 country. So she's going to read the card about a really cool  
22 gift that you're receiving today.

23          MS. BENNETT: Thank you.

24          Congratulations, and welcome. Our gift to you is  
25 Wyoming jade. It's our state's official gemstone and was once

1 called the green gold of Wyoming.

2 From ancient times, jade has been valuable and sought  
3 after. Many attributes -- many attribute qualities such as  
4 luck, prosperity, healing, balance, peace, harmony, and many  
5 others to this beautiful stone.

6 We hope that wherever your American journey and  
7 adventure takes you, it will be full of these things, and this  
8 small piece of Wyoming will go with you to remind you where it  
9 all began. Thank you, and welcome.

10 MR. BLISS: Congratulations.

11 (Applause.)

12 THE COURT: Thank you.

13 Now, before I turn to the important voting  
14 individuals or concerns, is there any other group that I have  
15 failed to recognize?

16 All right. So let us turn to representatives of  
17 those elected officials. Now that you have officially become  
18 a United States citizen, you officially get to vote. And you  
19 have the right to vote, and you have the duty to vote. Our  
20 country is a democracy. And if you remain silent, it's  
21 nobody's fault but your own if you want to gripe about what's  
22 going on.

23 So one of the things that we do in this country is  
24 have representatives that we contact in Washington, D.C., from  
25 Wyoming, and their representatives are here today: U.S.

1 Senator John Barrasso, Mr. McLemore; and Congresswoman  
2 Hageman, Ms. Scaling.

3 MR. McLEMORE: Thank you, Your Honor.

4 (Distribution of materials from the Wyoming congressional  
5 delegation.)

6 THE COURT: So inside those pamphlets are various  
7 phone numbers. If you don't like how things are going, give  
8 them a call. That's the way it works.

9 All right. With that, let me turn to one of the more  
10 entertaining things and more important things, frankly, about  
11 today, and that is an opportunity for you to introduce  
12 yourself and anyone here that's with you today and thank them.  
13 And just tell us one thing that makes you happy about today.

14 And I noticed when I was handing out the  
15 certificates, there were tears in some people's eyes, or there  
16 was the edge of that. And it's an important and significant  
17 day. So I want to give you the opportunity to just introduce  
18 yourself and anyone that you have here today and anything that  
19 you'd like to briefly mention.

20 MS. TIONGSON: Hello. My name is Mischell Tiongson.  
21 I work as a nurse at Banner Health, Wyoming Medical Center.  
22 I've been in the states for like ten years, and I'm so happy  
23 to be a citizen. I thank my partner, who is in Chicago right  
24 now. I had to fly, like, yesterday to be here because of the  
25 weather. And I thank the Hanson family for being with me

1 today. Thank you.

2 THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. HANSEN: Thank you. That was very intense. My  
5 name is Triinu, and I traveled here from Jackson, Wyoming.  
6 I've lived in the U.S. since I was 7. So -- and my twins were  
7 born in the U.S., so it means a lot to me to also be a  
8 citizen. Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

11 MR. DZIEDZIC: Hi. My name is Tom Dzedzic. I live  
12 in Laramie, so I drove up for the day. My family  
13 unfortunately couldn't make it, so they're watching on Zoom.  
14 So I guess I can wave to them. I wanted to say I've been in  
15 the United States for quite a while, and this is a completion  
16 of a long journey. And thank you, everybody, and to all the  
17 groups for the very warm welcome.

18 THE COURT: Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. DIGON: Hello. My name is Mitka Digon. I'm from  
21 Cheyenne, Wyoming. This is a very special moment for me. I  
22 wait ten years for become citizen. I wait for this special  
23 moment in Wyoming. I feel free. I want to say thank you,  
24 United States. Thank you.

25 THE COURT: Thank you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. ZUNIGA: Hello. My name is Daniel Coto. I live  
3 here in Casper. My wife is here, and my church friends are  
4 here, too. I just thank everybody and thank all the  
5 organizations for their warm welcome. Thank you.

6 THE COURT: Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. DE DALE: Hello. My name is Bernardina Dale, and  
9 I live in Wyoming for probably 30 years. So I was waiting for  
10 this moment, and I'm so happy. Thank you, America.

11 THE COURT: Congratulations.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. GARCIA: Hello. My name is Tatiana. I am here  
14 with my partner. We have been living in Wyoming for the last  
15 three years. I want to thank him for being here with me. I  
16 want to thank my mother at home for helping me through all  
17 this process, for being here together. I want to thank also  
18 my partner's family for being a great support system for me  
19 through all this whole process. Thank you.

20 THE COURT: Congratulations.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. GONZALEZ: I am Irina Ivshina Gonzalez. I live  
23 in Casper, Wyoming. Thank you very much for everybody.

24 THE COURT: You're very welcome.

25 (Applause.)

1           MR. ESTRADA: I got to follow that. Okay. My name  
2 is Victor Estrada. I live in Riverton, Wyoming. My mom and  
3 my sister, my nephews, and my brother-in-law is here. They  
4 made the drive from Denver, which is really nice. And then I  
5 have a bunch of -- group of friends on Zoom all the way from  
6 the nurses from Job Corps to the people from SkyWest. I want  
7 to thank every single one of them.

8           I'm going to cry.

9           Thank you, everybody, for welcoming us. It's really  
10 special. I've been waiting for a long time.

11          I'm sorry. I just want to say thank you.

12          (Applause.)

13          MR. RAMOS: Hi. My name is Manuel Ramos. I live in  
14 Riverton, Wyoming, for over three years. And congratulations  
15 everybody here, and thanks, United States. My wife here, too.  
16 Thank you.

17          (Applause.)

18          MR. GAPER: My name is Eduardo Gaper. Thank you so  
19 much. First I would like to thank our Lord God for giving  
20 this wonderful blessing to us, with my boss, my wife. It's  
21 beautiful, isn't it? With my kids in California. Thank you  
22 so much for this wonderful blessing.

23          THE COURT: Congratulations.

24          (Applause.)

25          MS. HUMPHREYS: My name is Thais Scott Humphreys.

1 I've actually been in the U.S. -- I came here when I was  
2 3 years old with my parents, so I've been here for over 30  
3 years. I would say it's the only -- I would say it's the only  
4 home that I've ever known, and now it's official that I get to  
5 finish their immigration journey.

6 I'm here with my in-laws. They're visiting from  
7 Mexico. And I have lots of people watching on the camera. So  
8 thank you all for being here and for giving me this  
9 opportunity.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. DENG: Hello, everyone. My name is Ailing Deng.  
12 I live in Lander, Wyoming, 13 years. My husband is there.  
13 Thank you so much. Thank you. Happy New Year.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. LUO: Hi, everyone. My name is Xiner. I am from  
16 Laramie, Wyoming. I moved here with my parents when I was  
17 2 years old. I basically grew up in Laramie and Wyoming. I'm  
18 a college student now, so I kind of left. But it's really  
19 cool to be back here for this special ceremony, and I want to  
20 thank everyone for taking the time to be here. Thank you all  
21 so much.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. ROMO: Hi. My name is Francesca Romo, and I live  
24 in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and I'm here with my husband and my  
25 kiddo. It's really a wonderful, amazing opportunity to be

1 here and to be witnessed and to witness all of you. So  
2 congratulations to you all.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. GAPER: Hello to everyone. My name is Maria  
5 Daisylyn Viray Gaper. I am from Shoshone with my minister --  
6 I'm a minister's wife. I thank you so much, all the people of  
7 Wyoming. You are so very kind. We've been to different  
8 places, but this really is my favorite state. People are so  
9 kind and good. It's like family.

10 So thank you so much. I will treasure this for the  
11 rest of my life.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. MELENDEZ: Hello. My name is Alberto Melendez,  
14 and I'm here with my wife, my son, and my in-laws. I want to  
15 tell my wife thank you very much. This was a long process,  
16 very stressful for her and for me, as well. But she did most  
17 of it. But I really appreciate everyone that's here -- thank  
18 you, guys -- and everything you guys gave us.

19 I will appreciate this moment forever. It has been a  
20 long journey. I've been living here since I was 11 in  
21 Cheyenne, Wyoming, and I'm a huge part of the community, and  
22 now it's official. So thank you guys very much.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. SEGERS: I'm Alda. I'm from Belgium. I moved to  
25 Dubois, Wyoming, ten years ago. And I want to thank my

1 friends, my husband, family, to be here. And I'm proud to be  
2 an American.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. AKPI: Hi. My name is Patricia, and I'm from  
5 Ghana, and I've been in Cheyenne, Wyoming, for five years.  
6 And I'm here with my sister, my mom, and my dad. I want to  
7 say a special thank you to my dad for sacrificing his life for  
8 20 years for me to be here. And he flew all the way from  
9 New York to be here, so I want to say a special thank you.  
10 And I'm so happy to be an American. Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. TODD: Hello. My name is Juliana Todd. I'm from  
13 Colombia. And we just complete five years in this process.  
14 So I always complained that being a legal immigrant in this  
15 country is pretty difficult, but seeing all of these cases,  
16 mine was fast. It was only five years. And thank you so  
17 much. It's a privilege being an American. And, yeah, God  
18 bless America. Thank you so much.

19 THE COURT: Congratulations.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. QUEZADA: Hi, guys. My name is Karina. I'm from  
22 Cheyenne, Wyoming. I have lived here in the United States for  
23 about ten years. I'm here today with my husband and my kiddo.  
24 They're outside because he was the little guy crying. I'm so  
25 sorry.

1           I know that my family is watching in the videos, and  
2 I want to thank my dad because he is a great guy, and he did a  
3 lot for us, and he was trying to look for better education for  
4 us. And he is not a resident of the USA, but he crossed the  
5 border for about -- I mean, he crossed the border about three  
6 times, and I love the stories that he told me.

7           And I want to thank everyone for being here and  
8 taking the time. I'm so happy that I'm a U.S. citizen, and  
9 God bless America. Thank you, guys.

10          (Applause.)

11          THE COURT: It is a long journey, whether it be by  
12 time or other commitments.

13          Mr. Kubichek, I would recognize you on behalf of the  
14 United States Attorney General for any remarks.

15          MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor. May it please  
16 the Court.

17          THE COURT: Counsel.

18          MR. KUBICHEK: You know, the longer I do this -- and  
19 I've been doing this a while -- it just seems like it becomes  
20 more humbling every time. You know, I usually remark about  
21 the fact that lots of us here -- I know the Judge hails from  
22 western Nebraska originally. I was born just up the street.  
23 Most of us in the room probably were citizens by birth. So we  
24 didn't really have to do anything except hang, you know.

25          But -- and you all, some of your stories are a little

1 similar in the sense that you really didn't have a choice,  
2 either. You were brought here when you were little, and here  
3 you are. And -- but still, you know, incidents at birth, you  
4 had to do a lot of work to get here today, and you had to  
5 really want it.

6 And one of the really important things about this  
7 ceremony that we have like four times a year is obviously to  
8 welcome you all into the family of American citizens but also  
9 to remind all of us about the journey that we've taken over  
10 the last, you know, 235, 236 years, from when our constitution  
11 was established as a country, to still preserve the concepts  
12 of equality and liberty and opportunity that were the basis  
13 for us starting back in the day and still remain, really, the  
14 focal points of what make us different.

15 You guys, look at each other. You know, you don't  
16 look alike. Good grief. And that's one of our strengths is  
17 we have all of you here, and you start today on equal footing  
18 with everybody else as a matter of your rights and your  
19 responsibilities, you know. That isn't any little thing.

20 And as I said, we've been at it for roughly 236 years  
21 since George Washington was sworn in. It hasn't always been  
22 easy. We've had to -- we've had to fight to preserve this.  
23 These gentlemen here are the living symbols of the people who  
24 gave their lives or their health voluntarily to make sure that  
25 we could carry on.

1           You know, and the symbolism goes on. Our ladies from  
2 the Daughters of the American Revolution and the War of 1812,  
3 they're stand-ins for the people who originally had the  
4 courage to say this -- and no offense to Great Britain. I  
5 know we have a couple of new citizens from there. But back in  
6 the day, we weren't getting along. And King George instituted  
7 some policies that, reasonably, the guys -- Ben Franklin,  
8 Thomas Jefferson, and those fellows -- thought were just  
9 inimical to us surviving as a society.

10           But they were planners. They were rich guys. They  
11 didn't have to do this. I mean, they were mad, but they  
12 didn't have to do all of this. But they did because, as a  
13 matter of principle, they wanted something different for them  
14 and for their ancestors.

15           So they staked their lives, literally, on the  
16 proposition that we can have a country that is based on equal  
17 opportunity where you can be what you can be based on the  
18 effort you put into it and your talents, and it isn't going to  
19 be just a matter of, you know, are you born under the monarchy  
20 or are you born into the peasantry.

21           You get to decide what you want to be by your  
22 desires, your dreams, and your effort. That's what they --  
23 that's what they fought for in 1776. That's what they  
24 envisioned when they -- when they established our constitution  
25 in 1789, and hopefully, that's what we still stand for.

1           Now, today is a day rife with even extra symbolism --  
2 or this week. Today, peacefully, in the House of  
3 Representatives, presided over by Kamala Harris, the vice  
4 president, who just lost the election, a certification that  
5 former President Trump is now certified as the winner of the  
6 election and will be inaugurated on January 20th as our  
7 46th [sic] president. We did that peacefully. And most of  
8 the time, that's how we've done it. And that's one of the  
9 things that makes us different and one of the things worth  
10 preserving in our country.

11           The other thing this week and something that we  
12 should all celebrate and should all remember is on Thursday,  
13 we're having sort of a national day of mourning for the  
14 38th [sic] President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, who  
15 passed away a couple of weeks ago at the age of 100. He's the  
16 oldest president, ex-president in our history.

17           But what's noteworthy about President Carter -- and  
18 we should all take a little minute to read up on him -- he was  
19 president from 1977 until January of 1981. I began my service  
20 in the Department of Justice under President Carter. He was  
21 not re-elected in 1981; Ronald Reagan was elected, and  
22 substantially.

23           So what did Jimmy Carter do, and his wife, Rosalynn?  
24 They went back to Plains, Georgia, where they were from. And  
25 instead of licking their wounds and just going back to make a

1 lot of money, they formed The Carter Center in Georgia, the  
2 purpose of which was simply to make the world a better,  
3 healthier, fairer place. And established in 1984, I think.

4 And so here we are. A whole lot of 40-some years  
5 later, it's still an ongoing business. And the idea of that  
6 was we can put our efforts -- we don't have to be president.  
7 We can do things and make the world better.

8 Another president, George H.W. Bush, in the late  
9 '90s, put it -- he had a program he called the 1,000 Points of  
10 Light, which had the idea that if we all just go out and do  
11 some things to make the world better, even little things, the  
12 combination of all of those efforts combined will really make  
13 a huge difference.

14 Now, we all can't do what Jimmy Carter's program did.  
15 I mean, one of the things -- there was a thing called Guinea  
16 worms in Asia and Africa. It was killing millions of people  
17 every single year, the reason for it just being bad, unhealthy  
18 water.

19 So he designed with his people a program to deal with  
20 Guinea worms. 3.5 million cases back in 1986. Do you know  
21 how many there were four years ago? 15. And I think there  
22 were 9 this year.

23 He also did Habitat for Humanity and went out up  
24 until he was -- I think his last time was like 96 he was out  
25 helping to build houses for poor people because homeownership

1 was important to the American way and the aspirations that we  
2 have.

3           So just give a little thought to Georgia H.W. Bush  
4 and to Jimmy Carter's examples of volunteerism. And now that  
5 you're citizens, you got all kinds of rules. You've got to  
6 vote. You've got to come down here when Judge Skavdahl calls  
7 you to participate in jury service. You know, you've got  
8 other stuff.

9           But make it a point to just, you know -- and I know  
10 you've got -- some of you have kids. A lot of you do. Help  
11 them understand why it's important, you know. We can all be  
12 grumpy at each other over our different political views and  
13 all that. That isn't going to get us anywhere, you know.  
14 Help just a little, you know, and you'll find you'll be  
15 happier, you'll feel like you're actually contributing to make  
16 your world a better place, and you will be making the world a  
17 better place.

18           So that's my word today. As I said, I've been  
19 doing -- Judge says it's getting hot in here, and I'm  
20 contributing to that, I'm sure.

21           So let's get out of here. You guys can go party down  
22 and celebrate your new status. We are, as President Biden  
23 said, very grateful that you picked us and wish you the very,  
24 very best in your future as citizens. I look forward to  
25 serving with you down the road, so long as I'm able, to making

1 America the kind of place we promised -- it promised us it  
2 could be with our help.

3 So congratulations. You all are amazing, and we're  
4 so grateful that you chose to join us in this journey.

5 (Applause.)

6 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek. It's not that  
7 warm in here, really.

8 Our newest U.S. citizens, their families, friends,  
9 supporters, it's a great honor and privilege that I have to be  
10 able to swear you in today and recognize you for your  
11 commitment and milestone in your lives.

12 You officially have become citizens of United States  
13 of America, and this is a day of joy, reflection, and new  
14 beginnings.

15 Some of you have gone 10 years, some of you 5, some  
16 of you 30. Some of you probably longer than that. And not  
17 only of you but your families and the sacrifice that they have  
18 made to get you to where you are today.

19 It truly takes more than just oneself to prosper and  
20 to advance. And your journey to this moment has been one of  
21 perseverance, courage, commitment, and sacrifice. You hail  
22 from diverse corners of the globe, each of you bringing unique  
23 experiences and perspective that enrich the fabric of our  
24 nation.

25 Today you join a proud tradition of immigrants who

1 have come before you seeking freedom, opportunity, and the  
2 chance to build a better life for yourselves and your  
3 families.

4           There was many men and women who joined across the  
5 oceans to come to this country and form it and sacrifice all  
6 that they had for that privilege and opportunity. Now, as new  
7 citizens, you share the rights and responsibilities that come  
8 with being part of this great nation. You have the right to  
9 speak freely, to assemble peacefully, and to worship as you  
10 choose. You have the ability and the obligation to vote and  
11 to play an active role in continuing to shape our democracy  
12 and its future.

13           With these rights, however, come the responsibility  
14 of upholding the values and principles that keep our nation  
15 strong and vibrant.

16           You have the right to speak freely, but you don't  
17 have the right to insult. You have the right to recognize how  
18 you wish to recognize, but you don't have the right to make  
19 someone else. Be mindful of that. Enjoy those rights and  
20 privileges. Engage in that democracy. Vote. Serve on a  
21 jury. Determine one's future as guilt or innocence.

22           Your willingness to embrace these responsibilities  
23 speaks volumes about your character and dedication. As you  
24 embark on this new chapter, remember that you are not alone.  
25 You are now part of a community that believes in the power of

1 dreams, the strength of unity, the promise of a better  
2 tomorrow, and the strength of diversity.

3 I was laughing internally, Mr. Kubichek, when you  
4 were talking about 100 years ago. 100 years ago today in this  
5 state, Nellie Tayloe Ross was sworn in as the first female  
6 governor in the United States of America. So there are  
7 important roles played everywhere, including in Wyoming.

8 On behalf of all citizens, I congratulate you on this  
9 significant achievement. May your journey as Americans  
10 continue to be filled with success, happiness, and fulfillment  
11 of all your aspirations and your families and friends. Thank  
12 you for choosing to be part of this great nation, and may God  
13 continue to bless us.

14 We'll stand in recess.

15 (Applause.)

16 (Proceedings concluded at 4:45 p.m., January 6, 2025.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, MEGAN E. STRAWN, Federal Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court for the District of Wyoming, a Registered Professional Reporter and Certified Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that I reported by machine shorthand the proceedings contained herein on the aforementioned subject on the date herein set forth, and that the foregoing 34 pages constitute a full, true, and correct transcript.

Dated this 16th day of January 2025.

/s/ Megan E. Strawn

MEGAN E. STRAWN  
Registered Professional Reporter  
Certified Realtime Reporter