

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

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

MARISOL CHAVIRA DOMINGUEZ, ERIN DAWN
MERRICK, MIGUEL CHAVIRA CARAVEO, THUY
THI NHU VAN, MOHAMMAD FURKAN KHAN,
ARNULFO LUNA OJEDA, IRFAN SOYDAN
USTUNERGIL, SHEYLA CRISTINA LEIVA
CABRERA, RUDIGER THEODOR MICHALAK,
SHARON GRACE RONESS, MOOKWON SEO, BOA
BYEON, ESEN SAYGIN KOC, JUDITH ANNE
MICHALAK, GULSUM GULTEKIN KUNTZ, RYAN
GORDON LEACHMAN, NIAMIE ISABEL SUAREZ,
REYMAR ACUIN ROJAS, FABIOLA MURGUIA
SANCHEZ, ANTOANETA HRISTOVA RACHEVA,

Petitioners.

Casper, Wyoming
May 11, 2026
3:42 p.m.

Ewing T. Kerr
Federal Courthouse

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

BEFORE THE HONORABLE SCOTT P. KLOSTERMAN
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE

SHANNON L. ZELT, RPR
Federal Official Court Reporter
111 South Wolcott Street, Room 217, Casper WY 82601
307.232.2626 * shannon.zelt@wyd.uscourts.gov

Proceedings reported by stenotype reporter.
Transcript produced by Computer-Aided Transcription.

APPEARANCES:

For the United States: Office of the United States Attorney
District of Wyoming
STEPHANIE SPRECHER
First Assistant U.S. Attorney
100 East B Street, Suite 2211
Casper, Wyoming 82601

1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:42 p.m., May 12, 2026.)

2 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye.

3 The United States District Court for the District of Wyoming
4 is now in session. The Honorable Scott P. Klosterman, Judge
5 Presiding. God save the United States and this Honorable
6 Court.

7 THE COURT: Good afternoon, please be seated.

8 Well, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and
9 welcome to the Ewing T. Kerr Federal Courthouse for a special
10 session of the federal court for the District of Wyoming. As
11 we begin, the Court will note that we will suspend our rules
12 in regards to cameras and recording devices for this special
13 session.

14 It is a tradition, at the beginning of these
15 naturalization ceremonies, to recognize those citizens and
16 families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate price in
17 defending what some in this world seek, which is the freedom
18 and benefit of being a United States citizen. For all the
19 American men and women who have been killed in action while
20 involved in military operations, as well as all military
21 personnel who have been wounded in action during these
22 military operations, I would like to take a moment of silence
23 to recognize these American heroes and their families whose
24 sacrifice cannot be measured and whose loss will never be
25 recovered.

1 So let's please take a moment of silence.

2 (Moment of silence.)

3 THE COURT: Thank you.

4 The United States District Court for the
5 District of Wyoming is in special session for this
6 naturalization of foreign nationals to the United States as
7 citizens. It is with great honor, pride, and privilege that I
8 am able to conduct today's naturalization ceremony where we
9 will be naturalizing 20 new United States citizens from 10
10 different countries from around the world.

11 The federal district court for the
12 District of Wyoming, including Chief Federal District Court
13 Judge Kelly Rankin, as well as Judges Alan Johnson, Nancy
14 Freudenthal, Scott Skavdahl, and Stephanie Hambrick, we extend
15 our congratulations to you and to your families and friends.

16 At this time I would ask Mariah Shafersman, the clerk
17 of district court, to please make a roll call of the
18 prospective applicants for United States citizenship.

19 And if you would, please raise your right hand when
20 your name is called.

21 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Fabiola Sanchez, Antoaneta
22 Racheva, Erin Merrick, Thuy Van, Gulsum Kuntz, Arnulfo Ojeda,
23 Irfan Ustunergil -- I apologize -- Sheyla Cabrera, Mohammad
24 Khan, Sharon Rosness -- Roness, Rudiger Michalak, Judith
25 Michalak, Mookwon Seo -- Seo, Boa Byeon, Esen Koc, Reymar

1 Rojas, Ryan Leachman, Niamie Suarez, Marisol Dominguez, and
2 Miguel Caraveo.

3 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, one of the most
4 fundamental acts that we do as citizens is to pledge our
5 allegiance to the flag of the United States. And I understand
6 that for today's ceremony we have Jay and Tyler Seo who will
7 lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

8 Also at this time we would have our colors presented
9 by the Natrona County ROTC.

10 And so, if you would, all please stand.

11 (Presentation of colors.)

12 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

13 THE COURT: Thank you, Jay and Tyler.

14 Next, we will have the singing of the *Star-Spangled*
15 *Banner*. And I believe we have -- is it Kristen Rowe?

16 Ms. Rowe.

17 (National Anthem.)

18 THE COURT: Thank you very much.

19 At this time we would ask the ROTC...

20 All right. Please be seated. I would like to thank
21 the members of the Natrona County ROTC, Joryn Wohl, Wrenee
22 Bryant, Coltyn Miller, and Niclous Brown.

23 At this time, Mariah, would you please play a video
24 from our President Donald trump.

25 If you'll just give us a moment for our technical

1 difficulties.

2 (Presidential message played.)

3 THE COURT: All right. At this time I would
4 recognize the United States Attorney for the
5 District of Wyoming, Ms. Stephanie Sprecher, representing the
6 Attorney General for the United States, for the presentation
7 of a petition.

8 MS. SPRECHER: Thank you, Your Honor.

9 May it please the Court.

10 THE COURT: Counsel.

11 MS. SPRECHER: Before the Court today are individuals
12 for a hearing on their petition for naturalization. Each of
13 these prospective citizens has successfully completed all the
14 steps necessary for eligibility for United States citizenship.
15 In addition to -- the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service
16 has completed its processes with respect to each of these
17 individuals, including all necessary background
18 investigations. Having successfully negotiated all of these
19 hurdles, the United States Attorney's Office is advised that
20 each of them is well-qualified to be admitted to citizenship.
21 Therefore, on behalf of the United States, I hereby move the
22 Court to admit each of these individuals to United States
23 citizenship upon their taking of the required oath.

24 Thank you.

25 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Sprecher.

1 On the petition of the United States, the Court finds
2 that each of the applicants identified has satisfied the legal
3 requirements to become citizens of the United States and,
4 therefore, the Court grants the petition and will enter an
5 order allowing these petitioners to become citizens of the
6 United States of America subject to the taking of an oath.

7 Our soon to be United States citizens, if you would,
8 please face me at this time. Please stand up and raise your
9 right hand and repeat after me.

10 I, state your name --

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

12 THE COURT: -- hereby declare on oath --

13 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- hereby declare on oath --

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

15 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- that I absolutely and
16 entirely --

17 THE COURT: -- renounce and abjure --

18 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- renounce and abjure --

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

20 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- all allegiance and
21 fidelity --

22 THE COURT: -- to any foreign prince and potentate --

23 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- to any foreign prince and
24 potentate --

25 THE COURT: -- state or sovereignty --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- state or sovereignty --

THE COURT: -- of whom or which --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- of whom or which --

THE COURT: -- I have heretofore been --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- I have heretofore been --

THE COURT: -- a subject or citizen --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- a subject or citizen --

THE COURT: -- that I will support and defend --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- that I will support and
defend --

THE COURT: -- the Constitution and laws --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- the Constitution and
laws --

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

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- of the United States of
America --

THE COURT: -- against all enemies --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- against all enemies --

THE COURT: -- foreign and domestic --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- foreign and domestic --

THE COURT: -- that I will bear true faith --

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- that I will bear true
faith --

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

PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- and allegiance to the

1 same --

2 THE COURT: -- that I will bear arms --

3 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- that I will bear arms --

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

5 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- on behalf of the

6 United States --

7 THE COURT: -- when required by law.

8 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- when required by law.

9 THE COURT: I take this obligation freely --

10 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: I take this obligation

11 freely --

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

13 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- without any mental

14 reservation --

15 THE COURT: -- or purpose of evasion --

16 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- or purpose of evasion --

17 THE COURT: -- so help me God.

18 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- so help me God.

19 THE COURT: Congratulations.

20 Please join me in welcoming our new citizens.

21 (Applause.)

22
23 THE COURT: You may be seated.

24 So, next, we will be presenting a presentation of
25 certificates to each of our new United States citizens. So I

1 will step down and we'll make our through -- make our way
2 through the jury box and congratulate each of you
3 individually. But at this time we will present our
4 certificates to you.

5 (Presentation of certificates.)

6 THE COURT: All right. Well, ladies and gentlemen,
7 we are honored today with various organizations from here in
8 Natrona County to help celebrate in this naturalization
9 ceremony. I would like to recognize these various patriotic
10 organizations that we have the privilege of having with us
11 here today.

12 And, first, I would recognize the Daughters of the
13 American Revolution, and I believe we have -- for the
14 Daughters of the American Revolution we have Kristen Rowe, who
15 sang our "Star-Spangled Banner," Shelly Trumbell, and
16 Nancy Gerlock, and Marilyn Arionus.

17 MS. ARIONUS: Arionus.

18 THE COURT: Very well. Well, thank you.

19 If you would like to come forward and say something
20 to our new citizens, we would greatly appreciate it.

21 MS. ARIONUS: All right. Is this fine right here?

22 THE COURT: Yes. If you could, step close to the
23 microphone.

24 MS. ARIONUS: Oh.

25 THE COURT: Thank you.

1 MS. ARIONUS: My fellow citizens our great American
2 author Willa Cather said, "The history of every country begins
3 in the heart of a man or a woman." Today the history of
4 America begins a new chapter in your hearts. You have the
5 United States of America as your country, and you have chosen
6 to begin your new life as Americans in the heart of America.
7 Thank you for making these choices. America will be enriched
8 by your citizenship.

9 I remind you that, while you have pledged your
10 loyalty to the United States, you do not give up your history
11 or your culture. Those things you cherish about your past,
12 your memories of your families and your friends, your music,
13 your literature, your celebrations, your manners, please bring
14 them with you. Those of us who have been American citizens
15 for many years can learn much from you.

16 You may have heard the Latin phrase e pluribus unum:
17 Out of many, one. We are one nation of people from many
18 backgrounds, bound together by certain principles of freedom,
19 equality, and justice. We all share a responsibility to each
20 other and to future Americans to preserve freedom, equality,
21 and justice. America and the principles it represents will
22 always be at danger. At home and abroad, your new country
23 needs your help. America's strength does not lie in its armed
24 forces or its economy as much as in the hearts and minds of
25 its people, good people of strong character, people like you.

1 Today you become a part of something great, America.
2 And today America becomes greater and more complete because of
3 you.

4 Congratulations.

5 (Applause.)

6 THE COURT: Thank you again, members of the Daughters
7 of the American Revolution.

8 I would also recognize at this time, from the Wyoming
9 Society of the United States Daughters of 1812, we have
10 Ms. Barb Bentzin; is that correct?

11 MS. BENTZIN: That's correct.

12 THE COURT: Please come forward.

13 MS. BENTZIN: Thank you, judge.

14 Ladies and gentlemen, it's certainly my pleasure to
15 welcome you to our United States. This is always a special
16 opportunity for us to witness you coming into our country as
17 citizens, and it's always so moving. On behalf of the Wyoming
18 members of the United States Daughters of the War of 1812, I'm
19 delighted to participate in your ceremony of naturalization
20 today.

21 The War of 1812 was a continuation of sorts of the
22 war of -- Revolutionary War to guarantee that the conditions
23 agreed upon at the end of the Revolutionary War were honored.
24 Many of those patriots also found -- or fought in the War of
25 1812 as did their sons and even some of the daughters.

1 Similar to the daughters of the American Revolution who just
2 spoke to you, our members are descendents of those patriots of
3 the War of 1812 who continued the fight to preserve the
4 freedoms of the United States.

5 It's my sincerest honor to welcome you to the
6 United States. And thank you for being here today.

7 (Applause.)

8 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Bentzin. Let me turn to
9 another group that is connected and served this country for
10 many years. And I would like to recognize now, from the
11 American Legion, we have Mr. Dean Welch.

12 Mr. Welch, please come forward.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Afternoon, sir.

14 First of all, United Veterans Council of Natrona
15 County would like to say thank you very much to the Court for
16 allowing us to be here. It is, in deed, a wonderful pleasure
17 for us. The other thing is we've got some members that are
18 missing, and it's for a very, very good person -- or reason.
19 When you raised your hand, you did one thing with the pledge.
20 You became our employee to the military. Each and every one
21 of you are an employee to our military. And thank you. Thank
22 you mostly for choosing us.

23 The other thing I would like to explain to you is
24 there's only one federal employee in the whole world that has
25 a special oath that they take. His Honor doesn't take it.

1 You didn't take it. And that is, when we take the oath, not
2 only do we pledge, like you, to our Constitution and hopefully
3 to provide -- provide for our safety to our country, but we
4 also owe our life to this country. And a lot of them have
5 done that, and it's called the ultimate service.

6 The other thing is what you have done, as a citizen
7 of this country, promised us that, when it is our time to meet
8 the deity, you'll be there for a funeral, a funeral, a
9 military funeral. And that's where our men are today. They
10 had a special funeral for a veteran that has left this world
11 and joined His Holiness.

12 The other thing is I'm going to tell you a little bit
13 about a couple of branches that aren't here which -- first,
14 Dean is with the American Legion, and he's also with our
15 county. And he's going to present to you and tell you what
16 the American Legion is. To me, they're a very special bunch
17 of people.

18 MR. WELCH: Well, first, congratulations.

19 Thank you, Your Honor. My name is Dean Welch. I'm
20 the Post Adjutant for the American Legion here in Casper.
21 American Legion was -- was chartered in Casper 107 years ago,
22 right after World War I. And our job is to help take care of
23 veterans. And veterans, of course, are a big part of our
24 community. So we always come to welcome you and thank you.

25 And we know you're going to get a lot of things

1 today. You all get a pin. You need something to keep all
2 your goodies in or you'll drop them on the floor.

3 Congratulations.

4 (Presentation of materials.)

5 MR. WELCH: On your bag you'll find a little flag.
6 That flag pin was donated to all of you from United Veterans
7 Council. And that's made up of all the different
8 organizations here in Natrona County. We gather once a month,
9 and we help perform the military funeral honors for all of our
10 veterans. So that's a collaboration with DAV, Veterans of
11 Foreign War, which I'm a life member, American Legion, life
12 member, and the Marine Corps League.

13 Turn it back over to Bob.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, sir.

15 The next one down the line alphabetically is called
16 the DAV, Disabled American Veterans. That's exactly what they
17 are. They have to have a disability or you can't belong to
18 it. Normally it's because of some action in a foreign country
19 that's caused that disability, loss of limb, an arm, who knows
20 what. Some people lost ears, eyes.

21 And we're kind of proud of our group because we're
22 the highest decorated of all of them. So many Purple Hearts.
23 It's unbelievable how we can even keep control of them.
24 That's how many there are. Purple Heart is a wound that's
25 occurred in a hostile country.

1 The DAV is mostly proud of what they do for our
2 veterans. We have two hospitals here in the state, and we
3 support the transportation. The vans are donated to us. We,
4 in turn, give them to the hospital. When they get done with
5 them, they give them back to us, and we get to the sell them
6 so we can buy new vans. All of our drivers are volunteer
7 drivers. We help them get from the home, maybe to the clinic
8 here in town, or get them to Sheridan back and forth, or to
9 Cheyenne.

10 On one of my trips as a volunteer driver, I had the
11 best experience of my whole life. I'm so proud of it. I
12 actually got to hold -- haul -- not hold -- a veteran. He
13 started out after high school in the Navy. He joined the
14 Navy, was in the Pacific during World War II. When he got
15 done after the war, he said, hmm, I got an education bill. I
16 think I'm going to go to school and learn to be a school
17 teacher. Right? He did. And just in the time he says, I
18 wonder what this ROTC thing is about. Well, they're going to
19 pay me to learn more about the military than I already know
20 and to go to school, so he joined the ROTC.

21 Upon graduation he was just in time to go to Korea.
22 After Korea, he came back and he says, well, I got some more
23 money in the education fund, I'm going to get my master's
24 degree and become administrator in the educational system.
25 Well, he did just in time to guess what? He didn't go to a

1 school. They sent him to Vietnam.

2 So he was a veteran of all three conflicts, and I got
3 to -- got to ride a trip with him, listen to him and just --
4 my day was wonderfully made. So with my heart, the DAV heart,
5 you're the reason why some of us continue to reenlist in the
6 military and spend the time that we did is for you all.

7 And we thank you again so very, very much. With
8 that, I would like to give you another pin -- so now you got
9 two pins -- and say thank you so much again. I'm so proud of
10 each and every one of you.

11 (Presentation of pins.)

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Thanks again folks. You're the
13 bestest gift that God could give us other than our wives, and
14 they do remind us every day.

15 Now, the next group is called the Veterans of Foreign
16 War -- or Wars. Like Dean, I'm also a member of that.
17 They're a group of veterans, male and female. And it's
18 exactly like they say, Veterans of Foreign Wars. That means
19 they had to leave their country, have boots on ground during a
20 conflict. And we just -- I think we're almost done with all
21 our World War II veterans now in Wyoming.

22 Is that correct?

23 MR. WELCH: Yeah, and a lot of our Korean have gone
24 too.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: And we make sure that they have their

1 funerals. The VFW is special to our hearts because all of us
2 have been in a foreign war and have suffered, but the pain
3 never ends. But when we see you folks, we know every day of
4 it was worth it.

5 So, once again, God bless you, God speed, and thank
6 you so much for choosing our country. We're very lucky to
7 have you. God bless.

8 Dean, could you help me with the salute, please.

9 Present arms.

10 (Salute given.)

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 THE COURT: Well, Mr. Welch and Mr. Williams, thank
14 you to you and your brother -- brothers and sisters that have
15 sacrificed greatly so that we can enjoy the benefits that we
16 do as citizens here today. So thank you very much speaking on
17 behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American
18 Veterans, as well as the American Legion.

19 Thank you for coming today.

20 Let me now turn to -- we'll hear from representatives
21 for our Wyoming congressional delegation. We'll have
22 representatives on behalf of United States Senator
23 John Barrasso. From his office we have Rosalee Swiger and --
24 is it Carl Meyers? I'm sorry. Carl Meyers.

25 And then, in addition, we'll hear from

1 representatives from Senator Cynthia Lummus's office. We have
2 Ally Garner and Jackie King Wagner.

3 And then also we will hear from a representative of
4 United States Congresswoman Harriet Hageman's office. And we
5 have Emma Pehringer and Rachel Hedges; is that correct?

6 All right. If you would like to, please come forward
7 and address our new citizens.

8 MS. SWIGER: I'd like to congratulate you all. And
9 we're excited, and we have some documents from
10 Senator Barrasso we'd like to hand out for you.

11 (Presentation of materials.)

12 THE COURT: So once again I'd like to thank the
13 representatives from our Wyoming Congressional delegation for
14 presenting the packets of materials for our new citizens.
15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, here today for
18 these naturalization ceremonies, it's one of the few occasions
19 that we, as judges, have an opportunity to see people who are
20 excited to be here in the courtroom. As you can imagine, many
21 times we have the individuals who are here not on their own
22 free will and are presented with some very serious life
23 changing circumstances. But here today it's a great
24 opportunity for us, as judges, to see this excited group, with
25 this great opportunity in front of you.

1 And so what we'd like to do at this time is present
2 to you a microphone so that you could introduce yourself. And
3 what we'd like you to do is after just introducing yourself
4 if -- first of all, if you could, tell us in this process of
5 becoming a United States citizen how long has it taken you.
6 And then next, if you could, just say something, maybe what
7 you're excited about or anything that comes to your mind about
8 becoming a U.S. citizen.

9 I know for many of you you may feel a little bit
10 hesitant to speak in public, but certainly this is just a
11 wonderful opportunity for us to congratulate you and to get to
12 know you a little bit. So if you could, just tell us a little
13 bit about yourself, how long it's taken you to become a
14 United States citizen, and anything that you're thankful for.

15 So once again, we'll start down here.

16 MR. KHAN: My name's Mohammad, and it's taken me
17 about five years here to become a U.S. citizen. And I'm just
18 really excited for the future in this country.

19 And thank you.

20 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. CABRERA: My name is Sheyla. For me it's been, I
23 believe, about six years. I mean, I'm with you. I'm excited
24 for the future too and to be done with all the procedures.

25 (Applause.)

1 MR. USTUNERGIL: My name is Irfan Ustunergil. I've
2 been in United States for 15 years. It took me a long time to
3 decide whether I wanted to become a citizen or not. And I
4 am -- I've been paying -- working and paying taxes so I am
5 excited to be able to finally vote. It won't -- won't be a
6 easy task, but I am excited about that.

7 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. LUNA: My name is Arnulfo Luna. I've been here
10 since I was like three months old. It took me a long to make
11 the decision to becoming a citizen. I didn't understand how
12 important it was until I had my -- my kids. Such an honor to
13 be part of this country. And I've lived here all my life, and
14 I love it.

15 Thank you so much.

16 THE COURT: Thank you, sir.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. KUNTZ: My name is Gulsum Kuntz, and I am from
19 Powell, Wyoming. And it took me six years to become United --
20 United States citizen.

21 And I just wanted to thank to my husband -- he was a
22 Marine, and now he's a veteran -- that he put love of
23 United States in my heart. I really appreciate that, and
24 thank you so much for being with me with all these process.

25 And thank you so much for this opportunity that you

1 guys gave to me, so...

2 THE COURT: Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. VAN: Hello, everyone. My name is Thuy, and I
5 come from Vietnam. And I have been here for about six year,
6 yeah. And I come here today with my husband and my adopted
7 parent today, yeah. And I'm -- I don't -- I don't want to say
8 anything. So I'm very -- I'm very happy and honored to be
9 here today.

10 Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. MERRICK: Hi. My name is Erin Merrick. I have
13 lived in the country for the last 14 years. It took me a
14 while to make the decision to go for citizenship, but I am
15 doing this for my little family. And it feels really
16 important.

17 Thank you.

18 THE COURT: Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. RACHEVA: Hello, everyone. My name is Antoaneta.
21 I'm here with my daughter. I'm so excited to be here today.

22 Thank you. Thank you so much.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. SANCHEZ: Hello, my name's Fabiola. I've been --
25 I'm from Mexico, and I've been here for 17 years. And I take

1 the decision to become a U.S. citizen because my husband
2 passed away last year, and he was a U.S. citizen, a really
3 hard working man. And I have three children. They're U.S.
4 citizen, and I'm doing this for my husband because he was
5 really excited for me to do this. So I'm doing this for --
6 for him and for my kids.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. RONESS: I'm Sharon, and I've been here since --
9 since just before I married my husband in 1962. He's -- he's
10 an Army veteran. And I'm also here with my son who's retired
11 U.S. Air Force. And I -- I finally decided that this is what
12 I should do.

13 So thank you so much.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. MICHALAK: Hello, everyone. My name is Rudi.
16 I've been in the United States since 2002. Took me a long
17 time to make up my mind. It's not an easy thing to let go of
18 your country. I knew, however, since 2001 that I was an
19 American at heart. I was -- it was 9/11 and I was at a
20 conference in the French Alps, and the awful news came out.
21 And after the initial shock subsided, the people went back to
22 the conference except all the Americans stayed outside. And
23 it took me about an hour to realize that I actually stayed
24 outside with them. And at that point I knew.

25 Thank you.

1 MS. MICHALAK: My name is Jude. I'm wife to Rudiger,
2 and I'm Canadian. I grew up in the southern most part of
3 Canada, so we were very Americanized. I'm very comfortable
4 here. It took me a long time to make the decision to become
5 an American citizen. We thought maybe we'd retire to Canada
6 for the healthcare, but we've been in Laramie for a long time
7 now, and this is home. This is home.

8 I'm very grateful because at the ages that we
9 emigrated, I think America is the only country that I know
10 of -- and I've lived in a few -- where you can start over.
11 You can start a business, which -- which I did. You can make
12 new friends who become your family. This is the land of
13 opportunity, and I am really proud to become an American
14 citizen. I will never not be a Canadian either, so I'm a
15 Can-American. And I want to vote. I think it's really
16 important to me, personally, to be able to vote where I live
17 and to make a difference.

18 Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. SEO: Hi. My name is Mookwon. So I'm from
21 South Korea, and I have been here for 14 years. And I have
22 two kids, and I thought the education for kids is better than
23 the South Korea. So I want to be a citizen in America, and I
24 want to live with them longer than only 10 years. So that is
25 why I applied.

1 Thank you. Thank you so much.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. BYEON: Hello. My name Boa Byeon, and I'm wife
4 of him -- and I'm his wife. When he decided to become
5 United States -- when he decided to apply for the citizenship,
6 I didn't really hesitate because I know he's making a good
7 decision, and I know this country is good.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. KOC: Hello. My name is Saygin, and I'm -- I've
11 been living here for over 16 years now. For me it was not a
12 decision because how can you even think about becoming the
13 citizen of the best country in the world. So to me that's --
14 if you have the opportunity, you should take it. And that's
15 what I did. I -- for many years I -- because I've lived here
16 for over a decade now, I already considered myself as a
17 patriot. I just didn't have the citizenship.

18 Now, hope -- now, at least I have it official too. I
19 can, you know, proudly talk about my -- you know, my love for
20 America and what it represents, the freedom and importance of
21 the individual and many other things.

22 Thank you so much.

23 THE COURT: Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. ROJAS: Hi. My name is Reyman Rojas. It took me

1 eight years to become a united citizen, and I would like to
2 thank my mom and family and friends and also the veteran of
3 this country. Thank you for your service. And I'm also
4 excited this future of this country.

5 MR. LEACHMAN: Hi. My name's Ryan Leachman. I've
6 lived here since 2008. I moved down from Canada to attend
7 college in Montana. I finished a degree there, two years.
8 I've lived all over Texas. And over the last six years been
9 in Wyoming, got a five-year-old daughter, three-year-old son.
10 He was born here. Daughter was born in Calgary, and my wife
11 is also Canadian. So I'm joining my son as a second citizen
12 in the family and working on the other two, but..

13 No, I'm just -- the thing I'm most excited about
14 being a citizen is that I know that I never have to leave the
15 United States again. Canada's a great country, but at the
16 same time living in Wyoming, raising your family here, you
17 can't be beat. Especially with the direction some other
18 places around the world are going. So super excited to be
19 here and raise our family here.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. SUAREZ: So hi. Hi my name is Niamie. Finally,
22 16 years after I'm citizen. So I'm very happy for me and for
23 my son, for my daughter. And I'm ready to be part of this
24 part.

25 Thank you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. DOMINGUEZ: Hi, my name is Marisol. I've been
3 here since I was six years old. So I'm very, very happy today
4 that we've -- that I finally went through all the loops, all
5 the process, and finally became a citizen, something that I
6 I've always wanted to be since I was a little girl. And, of
7 course, you guys know it's a big process, but I'm very
8 grateful and I'm very happy to be here at this moment.

9 THE COURT: Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. CARAVEO: Hi. My name is Miguel. I'm just so
12 excited to be here with all of you this -- on this room and
13 just get ready for the future. And I'm just so thankful to be
14 here, just to become a U.S. citizen and then be part of this
15 great nation.

16 Thank you.

17 THE COURT: Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 THE COURT: Well, thank all of you for sharing some
20 little bit about yourself. I -- I know it's sometimes
21 difficult to speak in front of people who you haven't spoken
22 in front of before, but thank you very much for sharing your
23 stories. We are excited to have you as new U.S. citizens.
24 And, once again, congratulations.

25 At this time I would recognize Ms. Stephanie Sprecher

1 for her remarks on behalf of the Attorney General for the
2 United States.

3 MS. SPRECHER: Thank you, Your Honor.

4 THE COURT: Thank you.

5 MS. SPRECHER: As Judge Klosterman alluded to, this
6 is one of the best celebrations that we have in this
7 courtroom, and I'm very glad to be a part of it. At the U.S.
8 Attorney's Office we're usually coming over and recommending
9 that people be punished somehow, and this is a great honor to
10 be able to be here and to celebrate you.

11 The celebration in all of your stories reminds us of
12 what it -- what makes a U.S. citizen. And it's not their
13 bloodlines. It's a person who has a love for this country and
14 all that that means and represents. And each of you have
15 shared your story about how it means so much to you to be an
16 American citizen. And it's all just a little bit different,
17 but we all have the same goal, to make this country great.
18 And we welcome you being here and working towards that goal.

19 I want to take a moment to commend your bravery
20 because I know that you all came from countries that you
21 probably loved, families that you loved that are -- still may
22 be there. And it takes some bravery, indeed, to move forward
23 to be become a U.S. citizen. And not only does it take
24 bravery, but it also takes some perseverance because I know
25 that you had to work hard to get to this moment.

1 And for most of the American citizens, we are born
2 into it and we don't have to work for it. And for you to work
3 so hard to be a part of that just really means that there's --
4 there's promise in all that you will do to make this country
5 great.

6 I know that there are challenges that you have faced
7 along the way. And certainly in your journey as U.S. citizens
8 there'll be other challenges. You might run into some
9 negativity, but I want you to know that those people that are
10 negative, they aren't the majority. The majority of us
11 welcome you. The majority of us celebrate your
12 accomplishments, and the majority of us are grateful that you
13 picked us to be part of.

14 And I'd like to welcome you as new and equal partners
15 in U.S. -- as U.S. citizens, and hopefully we can navigate
16 together what it means to be good U.S. citizens.

17 So thank you for being here, and congratulations and
18 best wishes.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Sprecher.

22 Well, ladies and gentlemen, I get to have the last
23 word before we conclude today's naturalization ceremony. And,
24 once again, I would like to congratulate each of you, your
25 families, and your friends. The importance, the significance,

1 and joy of this event for you, for your families, and friends
2 cannot be overstated. You have worked hard to earn the rights
3 and the duties of becoming a United States citizen. There is
4 no perfect country or government and the United States is no
5 different.

6 The exception is that our country was forged by
7 immigrants who had experienced tyranny, persecution,
8 feudalism, and oppression by their governments. It was
9 because of that oppression and persecution that our founders
10 were willing to sacrifice, and many did sacrifice it all for
11 the betterment of their families and future generations of
12 Americans. These men and woman formed a government unlike any
13 other. One that was designed to serve the people, not one
14 where the people served the government.

15 That is why it is so critical that, as citizens, you
16 and all of us participate and contribute to our government
17 because we the people give the government it's power. To
18 improve or change we must all participate. Lest we stand
19 silent and fail to exercise our rights and support our
20 constitution and recognize it is we the people who must
21 exercise, support, and defend our rights, we run the risk of
22 extinction just like any other government. Our Constitution
23 is simply a paper document. Without people participating,
24 believing in, and defending it, it is rendered valueless.

25 In thinking about what I would say to you today,

1 ladies and gentlemen, I go back to the preamble to the United
2 States Constitution. And there are three words, and those
3 words are "We the people." That couldn't be more inclusive.
4 That means all of us, all peoples of different faiths, of
5 different beliefs. All of us are considered "We the people"
6 as part of the United States of America.

7 To you, as our newest citizens, I encourage you with
8 your enthusiasm, your skills, and talents to make us a more
9 diverse and talented country and enrich our democracy. It's
10 important with your obligations and duties now as a
11 United States citizen, that you should vote, that you should
12 exercise your rights and freedoms, but also appreciate and
13 respect the divergent views and beliefs that make this country
14 what it is. We must all appreciate how and why we enjoy the
15 freedoms we do. It is not because we all think and believe
16 the same but, rather, because we respect each other's
17 diversity and freedom to have differing beliefs.

18 You are now part of us, the richly woven fabric of
19 the United States of America. May we never forget the rights
20 and the freedoms that we enjoy exist only because of those who
21 have forged this country, believed in it, and valued it more
22 than their own self-interest. May we always honor our
23 commitment to each other above self, and may God continue to
24 bless the United States of America.

25 Congratulations.

1 (Applause.)

2 THE COURT: In a moment here the Court will stand in
3 recess, but I would like you -- or to invite you, if any of
4 you would like, to have a picture taken. We can do that here
5 up on the bench next to our flag and our seal. If any of you
6 would like to come forward with your loved ones or family
7 members, we can just take pictures if you would like.

8 Once again, congratulations to all of you.

9 And the Court will stand in recess.

10 Thank you.

11 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: All rise.

12 Court stands in recess.

13 (Proceedings concluded at 4:41 p.m., May 11, 2026.)
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Dated this 2nd day of September, 2026.

/s/ Shannon L. Zelt

**Shannon L. Zelt, RPR
Federal Official Court Reporter**