

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  
September 9, 2024  
4:02 p.m.

AIDA CERVANTES; MARIA MUNOZ  
CHAPARRO; ROCELYN DUMLAYAN  
ECHANO; FNU RENGAL; MELISSA Y.  
SLACK; SAMA BASNET; JOHNNATAN  
VARELA MENESES; BIANCA INFANTE  
DE LA CRUZ; JESUS BURGOS  
RODRIGUEZ; SERGIO CHAVIRA  
GONZALEZ; SHABNAM TARIQ;  
CARLEIGH M. BOUCHER; CHARMAINE  
MARTINEZ; TAMMY J. MURPHY; ITUKA  
EMMANUEL; INGER CLARK; MARIA  
RIOS; EDUARDO DOMINGUEZ NAVA;  
NORMA LETICIA EWING; MIROSLABA  
TRABERT,

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:

For the Government:

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1 (Proceedings commenced at 4:02 p.m., September 9, 2024.)

2 THE COURT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and  
3 welcome to the Ewing T. Kerr Federal Courthouse.

4 The Court will suspend all rules on cameras and  
5 recording devices.

6 I would note it is a tradition at the beginning of  
7 these naturalization ceremonies to recognize those citizens  
8 and families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate  
9 price in defending what so many in this world seek: the  
10 freedom and benefits of becoming a United States citizen.

11 As of this morning, at 10:00 o'clock a.m. Eastern  
12 Time, 7,088 American men and women have been killed in action  
13 while involved in military operations in the Middle East. In  
14 addition, 53,553 United States military personnel have been  
15 wounded in action during these military operations.

16 Let us take a moment 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 COURT: Thank you.

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

1 citizens from nine different countries around the world.

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

6 I would ask that, Mr. Chang, if you could give a roll  
7 call of prospective applicants for U.S. citizenship, and if  
8 you could raise your hand as your name is called so we can  
9 verify we have you in the right place.

10 MR. CHANG: The petitioners are: Aida Cervantes from  
11 Mexico; Maria Munoz Chaparro, Mexico; Rocelyn Dumlayan Echano,  
12 Philippines; Fnu Rengyal from India; Melissa Slack from  
13 Mexico; Sama Basnet from Nepal; Johnnatan Varela Meneses,  
14 Costa Rica; Bianca Infante De La Cruz, Mexico; Jesus Burgos  
15 Rodriguez, Mexico; Sergio Chavira Gonzalez, Mexico; Shabnam  
16 Tariq from Pakistan; Carleigh Boucher from Canada; Charmaine  
17 Martinez from Philippines; Tammy Murphy from Canada; Ituka  
18 Emmanuel from Cameroon; Inger Clark from Norway; Maria Rios  
19 from Mexico; Eduardo Dominguez Nava from Mexico; Norma Leticia  
20 Ewing from Mexico; and Miroslaba Trabert from Mexico.

21 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Chang.

22 One of the most fundamental acts we do as United  
23 States citizens is to pledge our allegiance to the flag of the  
24 United States; and I would ask Tyler and Jessykah Bennett, if  
25 you could come forward and lead us in the Pledge of

1 Allegiance.

2 If you could please stand, and remain standing for  
3 the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

4 (Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

5 (Playing "The Star-Spangled Banner.")

6 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

7 I would like to thank the Colonel and the Natrona  
8 County ROTC for their posting of the colors, of the flag. I  
9 got a little off focus here because I was trying to make up  
10 some time. We were a little delayed, and I apologize. But  
11 thank you to the Natrona County Junior ROTC for their  
12 assistance.

13 At this time, I would ask that the Clerk of Court  
14 play the message from the President of the United States.

15 (Playing message from the President of the United States.)

16 THE COURT: At this time, I would recognize Mr. David  
17 Kubichek on behalf of the United States Attorney for the  
18 District of Wyoming for presentation of a petition.

19 Mr. Kubichek?

20 MR. KUBICHEK: May it please the Court.

21 THE COURT: Counsel.

22 MR. KUBICHEK: Before the Court today are individuals  
23 here for a hearing on their petitions for naturalization.  
24 Each of these prospective citizens has successfully completed  
25 all of the steps necessary for eligibility for United States

1 citizenship.

2           Moreover, the United States Citizenship and  
3 Immigration Service has completed its processes with respect  
4 to each of these individuals, including the necessary  
5 background investigations.

6           Having successfully negotiated all of these hurdles,  
7 we are advised that each of them is well qualified to be  
8 admitted to citizenship.

9           Therefore, Your Honor, on behalf of the Attorney  
10 General of the United States, I hereby move the Court to admit  
11 each of these individuals to United States citizenship upon  
12 their taking of the required oath.

13           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

14           On the petition of the United States, the Court would  
15 find that each of these applicants identified has satisfied  
16 the legal requirements to become citizens of the United States  
17 of America and will therefore grant the petition and enter an  
18 order allowing these petitioners to become citizens of the  
19 United States subject to the taking of the oath.

20           Our soon-to-be newest United States citizens, if you  
21 would please stand and face me and raise your right hand and  
22 repeat after me.

23           And those of you who wish to relocate to get a better  
24 picture, you may do so.

25           I, state your name.

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

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

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

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

5 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- that I absolutely and

6 entirely --

7 THE COURT: -- renounce and abjure --

8 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- renounce and abjure --

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

10 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- all allegiance and

11 fidelity --

12 THE COURT: -- to any foreign prince, potentate --

13 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- to any foreign prince,

14 potentate --

15 THE COURT: -- state, or sovereignty --

16 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- state, or sovereignty --

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

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

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

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

21 THE COURT: -- a subject or citizen;

22 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- a subject or citizen;

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

24 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: That I will support and

25 defend --

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

2 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- the Constitution and  
3 laws --

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

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

7 THE COURT: -- against all enemies --

8 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- against all enemies --

9 THE COURT: -- foreign and domestic;

10 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- foreign and domestic;

11 THE COURT: That I will bear true faith and  
12 allegiance to the same;

13 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: That I will bear true faith  
14 and allegiance to the same;

15 THE COURT: That I will bear arms --

16 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: That I will bear arms --

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

18 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- on behalf of the United  
19 States --

20 THE COURT: -- when required by law.

21 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- when required by law.

22 THE COURT: I take this obligation freely --

23 PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: I take this obligation  
24 freely --

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



1           PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- without any mental  
2 reservation --

3           THE COURT: -- or purpose of evasion.

4           PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: -- or purpose of evasion.

5           THE COURT: So help me God.

6           PROSPECTIVE CITIZENS: So help me God.

7           THE COURT: Congratulations, our newest citizens.

8           (Applause.)

9           THE COURT: If you want to have a seat, we'll hand  
10 out the certificates.

11          (Presentation of certificates.)

12          THE COURT: So one of the things that we do at this  
13 ceremony is we have various patriotic organizations that have  
14 assisted us in reinforcing the significance and importance  
15 that individual citizens have played in defending our freedoms  
16 and obtaining our freedoms. And these various entities  
17 represent group that have dedicated themselves, either  
18 personally or thorough their families, to our freedoms and  
19 rights that we enjoy.

20          I would first recognize Daughters of the American  
21 Revolution and the Wyoming Society of U.S. Daughters of 1812.

22          MS. ROWE: Thank you, Your Honor.

23          THE COURT: Thank you.

24          MS. ROWE: Congratulations, my fellow Americans. My  
25 name is Kristen Rowe, and I'm here on behalf of the Fort

1 Caspar Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. We are  
2 a women's service organization focusing on historic  
3 preservation, education, and patriotism.

4 I consider myself very lucky to have been born here.  
5 My ancestors fought for these rights for me. I've been given  
6 freedoms and opportunities that some can only dream of. This  
7 is something in which I take great pride.

8 Each of you have had a unique journey, none of which  
9 were easy, I am sure. Whether you came by boat, plane, bus,  
10 or foot, you made the necessary steps to join us all as  
11 citizens today. You surpassed many difficult adjustments that  
12 come with moving to a new country and fought hard to become an  
13 American just like me and my DAR sisters.

14 I commend you on your hard work and dedication to  
15 achieve this status. I would like to welcome you, on behalf  
16 the chapter, as our newest countrymen.

17 We ask only that you love America, cherish her, honor  
18 her, protect her, and embrace all of the possibilities you are  
19 given.

20 May God bless each and every one of you on your new  
21 journey.

22 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Trumbull [sic].

23 And Ms. Farmer or Ms. Haines?

24 MS. HAINES: Ms. Haines, yes.

25 Good afternoon. I'm Susan Haines. And on behalf of

1 the Wyoming members of the United States Daughters of the War  
2 of 1812, I am delighted to participate in your ceremony of  
3 naturalization today.

4 The War of 1812 was a continuation of sorts of the  
5 Revolutionary War to guarantee that the conditions agreed upon  
6 at the end of the Revolutionary War were honored.

7 Many Revolutionary War patriots also fought in the  
8 War of 1812, as did their sons and even some of their  
9 daughters.

10 Similar to the Daughters of the American Revolution,  
11 who just spoke to you -- and she's a hard act to follow, I'll  
12 tell you -- our members are descendants of those patriots of  
13 the War of 1812 who continued the fight to preserve the  
14 freedoms of the United States.

15 It is my sincerest honor to say to you today welcome  
16 as a citizen of our beautiful United States of America.

17 Thank you.

18 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Haines.

19 I would recognize Ms. Bennett and Mr. Bliss on behalf  
20 of the Natrona County 4H.

21 MR. BLISS: Thank you, Your Honor, and  
22 congratulations to all of our citizens here today. Natrona  
23 County 4H, what we do is we empower young people; but our  
24 broader mission is, of course, encouraging and supporting  
25 families, which, now, you are a part of all of the families

1 within the United States.

2           So today our gift to you is Wyoming jade, our state's  
3 official gemstone and once was called the green gold of  
4 Wyoming. From ancient times, jade has been valuable and  
5 sought after many attributes: qualities of luck, prosperity,  
6 healing, balance, peace, harmony, and many others to this  
7 beautiful stone.

8           We hope that wherever your American journey and  
9 adventures take you, it will be full of these things, and the  
10 small piece of Wyoming will go with you to remind you where it  
11 all began.

12           So thank you for being a citizen now in the United  
13 States, and a little reminder of Wyoming to take with you.

14           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Bliss.

15           I would recognize Mr. Laurenz on behalf of the United  
16 Veterans Council of Natrona County.

17           MR. LAURENZ: Thank you, sir. My name is Hank  
18 Laurenz. I'm president of the Natrona County United Veterans  
19 Council, which is an organization that combines most of the  
20 veterans organizations within Natrona County.

21           The VFW on my left here, Ernie Blackford is  
22 representing them.

23           MR. BLACKFORD: My name is Ernie Blackford. I'm past  
24 Post commander of the VFW 9439. The Veterans of Foreign Wars  
25 was established in 1899 at the end of the Spanish-American

1 War.

2 I'll give these out.

3 THE COURT: Thank you.

4 And, Mr. Welch and Winzenreid.

5 MR. WELCH: My name is Dean Welch. I'm the Post  
6 adjutant for the American Legion Post 2 here in Casper. I was  
7 also the district commander at one time. Larry Winzenreid is  
8 our current second vice commander for the Post.

9 The American Legion has been around since 1919 to  
10 help protect and defend the veterans that have given so much  
11 for our country. And we'd like to invite all the new citizens  
12 to make those people proud of who they are serving for to be  
13 citizens of the United States.

14 We've got some handouts.

15 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Welch, Mr. Winzenreid.

16 MR. WINZENREID: Thank you, sir.

17 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Laurenz.

18 MR. WELCH: Little tote bags for to you put all the  
19 stuff we hand you.

20 (Presentation of materials.)

21 THE COURT: Many of you are, no doubt, entrepreneurs,  
22 and one of the many things that we have assist people with  
23 their business and their entrepreneurships is the Small  
24 Business Administration.

25 And I believe, Mr. James, are you present?

1 MR. JAMES: Yes, sir.

2 Thank you, Your Honor.

3 Congratulations. I'd like to present you with all  
4 the resources that are available to you now as being citizens  
5 of the United States and any of your business aspirations.

6 (Presentation of materials.)

7 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. James.

8 MR. JAMES: Thank you, Your Honor.

9 THE COURT: So one of the most important things,  
10 aside from jury duty, that you get to serve as a U.S. citizen  
11 is coming up in November, and that is an election. That's an  
12 election that you can now vote in. And it's important that  
13 you do that and exercise those rights and duties as citizens  
14 that you now have.

15 As part of this ceremony, Senator Barrasso,  
16 Ms. Kelley; we have also Senator Lummus' office, Ms. Garner;  
17 and on behalf of Congresswoman Hageman, Ms. Scaling and  
18 Ms. Hedges.

19 These are our elected representatives in the Capitol  
20 in Washington, D.C. And they're going to hand out to you the  
21 various letters of congratulations and contact so when you  
22 don't like the way things are going, pick up the phone or stop  
23 down at the office.

24 (Presentation of letters from Wyoming Congressional  
25 Delegation.)

1 THE COURT: Thank you, ladies.

2 All right. Let me -- I believe that we have  
3 identified all the participants today that have helped us.

4 Let us turn to what's most important here today in  
5 terms of your situation, and that is you becoming United  
6 States citizens. One of the things that we do is I'd like to  
7 give you the opportunity to recognize those people that maybe  
8 have brought you here or are with you today and your family  
9 and anything that you would like to share with us, telling us  
10 one thing that makes today a special day for you.

11 And we would start with Aida.

12 MS. CERVANTES: (Speaking in Spanish.)

13 THE COURT: (Speaking in Spanish.)

14 MS. CERVANTES: Thank you.

15 THE COURT: Do you have anyone joining you today,  
16 live or otherwise?

17 MS. CERVANTES: My husband right there.

18 THE COURT: And where from Wyoming are you coming?

19 MS. CERVANTES: Gillette.

20 THE COURT: Gillette.

21 And your husband, I'm going to make him stand up so  
22 that we know who he is.

23 Congratulations, and congratulations to you.

24 (Applause.)

25 THE COURT: Anything else?

1 All right. Maria?

2 MS. MUNOZ CHAPARRO: My name is Maria. Thank you so  
3 much. Me is happy. Thank you, my family, my son, and my  
4 daughter.

5 THE COURT: And they have to stand.

6 MS. MUNOZ CHAPARRO: Thank you so much. And  
7 Gillette, Wyoming.

8 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. ECHAN0: I did not expect for a speech. I should  
11 have started last night. But, anyways, thank you so much to  
12 my husband and my stepson, Sean. Tim, thank you so much.  
13 Thank you so much, fellow Americans, for accepting us. Thank  
14 you so much.

15 THE COURT: Thank you for joining us.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. RENGYAL: Hi. My name is (inaudible). I'm from  
18 India. Thank you. I love my wife.

19 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. SLACK: My name is Melissa. I'm out of Rawlins,  
22 Wyoming. I am here with my husband, one of my kiddos, and my  
23 mom. I want to thank them for coming with me, and also thank  
24 you to my husband for helping with this.

25 And thank you, sir, for the ceremony today.



1 THE COURT: Thanks for being here.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. BASNET: I'm super nervous. My name is Sama.  
4 I'm from Nepal. I came here today with my husband. He's in  
5 the back over there. And thank you.

6 THE COURT: Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. VARELA MENESES: Thank you. I'm Johnnatan. I'm  
9 from Costa Rica. Thank you, Your Honor, for everything. And  
10 my wife is here, my two kids, two friends. And thank you, all  
11 of you guys, for everything. I appreciate it.

12 THE COURT: Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. DE LA CRUZ: Hello, everybody. My name is  
15 Bianca. I was not expecting to speak, so I'm a lit bit  
16 nervous. But I want to thank all of you for coming here. I  
17 want to express everything to my coworkers and friends who are  
18 here who drove all the way from Laramie. To my family, who  
19 also drove from Victor, Idaho, and they drove from Jackson and  
20 everywhere to be here with me today. So I want to thank you.

21 (Speaking in Spanish.)

22 I'm going to cry. And thank you, Judge.

23 THE COURT: Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. BURGOS RODRIGUEZ: My name is Jesus Burgos.

1 Thank you, everybody, for coming and supporting all of the new  
2 citizens and everybody. I'm from Gillette, Wyoming. And  
3 yeah, thank you.

4 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. CHAVIRA GONZALEZ: Hello. My name is Sergio.  
7 Thank you for everything. And I have my sons over there.  
8 Thank you.

9 THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. TARIQ: Hi. My name is Shabnam Tariq. I would  
12 like to say thank you United States of America to give me a  
13 opportunity to become a U.S. citizen. Thank you so much. And  
14 thank you, Melissa. She helped me a lot. Thank you. And  
15 thank you, Judge, for our ceremony. Thank you.

16 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. BOUCHER: I'm Carleigh. I'm from Canada. Thank  
19 you, sir, for this opportunity. And I'd like to thank  
20 everyone else who made this day special for us all.  
21 There's -- you can tell there was a lot that was put into this  
22 to make it feel special for us, and thank you so much.

23 I'm also here with my family and my two boys and my  
24 husband. And thank you -- to my little boys, thank you so  
25 much for your patience.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. MARTINEZ: Hi, everyone. My name is Charmaine.  
3 I'm from Gillette, Wyoming. I'm with my family over there,  
4 the two boys. And I'm very grateful for everything.

5 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. MURPHY: My name is Tammy. I'm from Canada. I  
8 have to thank my husband, my daughter, my other daughter, and  
9 my son that are all here for supporting me throughout the  
10 years that it has taken. Thank you for this, and Semper Fi.

11 THE COURT: Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. EMMANUEL: Wow. The ovation is powerful. I want  
14 to thank you, Your Honor, for this beautiful occasion. And  
15 thanks everyone that is here, present. And I also want to  
16 thank my wife for all the support and thank my son, my  
17 daughter, and my son. Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. CLARK: First of all, thank you very much for a  
20 very nice ceremony. Thank you to my family and friends who  
21 are here to support me today. And I'm proud to be an  
22 American, also. Thank you.

23 THE COURT: Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. RIOS: Good afternoon to you all. My name is

1 Lupe, and I'm so blessed to have my family, my children. And  
2 I guess I am blessed to be here. And thank you, Your Honor,  
3 and all of you who gave us this wonderful gifts and  
4 information that we will -- later on will be so important to  
5 us to have to use.

6 Thank you so much.

7 THE COURT: Thank you

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. DOMINGUEZ NAVA: Hello. I'm Eduardo Dominguez.  
10 I just want to say thank you for this great opportunity to the  
11 United States of America, and thank you to Your Honor.

12 THE COURT: Congratulations.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. EWING: Hi. My name is Norma Ewing. I'm coming  
15 from Gillette with my husband and his best friend, now is my  
16 best friend, too.

17 I'm so nervous when I talk in public. But thank you  
18 for everything. We studied so hard the history of the United  
19 States. Thank you.

20 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. TRABERT: Hi. My name is Miroslaba. Thank you  
23 so much for the beautiful ceremony. I just want to say I feel  
24 the privilege to become a citizen of the United States.

25 Thank you so much.

1 THE COURT: Thank you.

2 (Applause.)

3 THE COURT: Thank you. It's always gratifying to  
4 hear from you all who have worked long and hard to get there  
5 in those seats and be able to take that oath today, whereas  
6 some of us were gifted that.

7 I would, at this time, recognize Mr. Kubichek on  
8 behalf of the United States Attorney General, Merrick Garland,  
9 for remarks to the new citizens.

10 MR. KUBICHEK: Well, this is a -- every time we do  
11 this, you know, I feel especially privileged to be here and  
12 participate in this.

13 You all had to go through lots of hoops to get to  
14 this day, and it wasn't easy. I absolutely know. You had to  
15 study. You had to pass background checks and all of that.  
16 And you stuck with it. And here we are today, and as the  
17 President said in his remarks, you've ascended to that title  
18 that he's most proud of, and that is a U.S. citizen.

19 We celebrate that today. And I want to just -- a  
20 couple of notes of importance about this day. Today's the 9th  
21 of September. And so in about nine days, our Constitution  
22 will be 235 years old. In just two years, our country will be  
23 250 years old. So those are relatively remarkable benchmarks  
24 if you think about it.

25 On the tail end of the Civil War, when Lincoln was at

1     Gettysburg, consecrating a cemetery there and a terrible  
2     battle between two sides, he remarked that the United States  
3     was a country that was conceived in liberty and dedicated to  
4     the proposition that all people are created equally. And he  
5     said the war was a test about whether that nation, or really  
6     any nation so conceived and so dedicated, could long endure.

7             So far, here we are. We've endured. And it hasn't  
8     been easy. You know, the human species being what it is,  
9     we're not always agreeable with each other, and sometimes  
10    countries behave in a way that if your kids did it, you'd  
11    whack them.

12            And oftentimes, when they misbehave, the last thing  
13    they think about are the individual lives of their people.  
14    And each of our lives, for us, they're precious.

15            Well, to make it those 250 years, lots and lots of  
16    sacrifices. We have these gentlemen over here join us every  
17    time we have one of these ceremonies because they represent  
18    the individual sacrifices of thousands and thousands of  
19    Americans who put their lives on the line and took an oath  
20    very similar to the oath you took today to support and defend  
21    the Constitution and, if necessary, to lay their lives down in  
22    support of that oath. And it's important to remember that  
23    when we think about how precious the continuity of our country  
24    has been for the last 250 years, roughly.

25            So we are honored that they join us today to remind

1 us that none of this has been easy. And it doesn't get  
2 easier, you know.

3 So today you have moved into a wonderful opportunity  
4 to become a member of this civil society, to vote, to  
5 participate; but, also, you've come into some new obligations  
6 and responsibilities. Everybody, for it to work, has to weigh  
7 in and help, you know, by voting your conscience.

8 Judge Skavdahl mentioned sometimes he's going to make  
9 you come down here and participate in our process. And that's  
10 a good thing, because one of the places where we are most  
11 reminded of what separates us from a lot of places in the rest  
12 of the world is what happens here, because one of the things  
13 we are dedicated to is the idea that we are a nation of laws  
14 and not men.

15 You swore today that you'd give up allegiance to any  
16 kings or princes or potentates. I don't know if anybody  
17 describes themselves as a potentate anymore, but they might  
18 have at one time. But the point is that what's the most  
19 important thing about the way we organize ourselves and we  
20 carry on as a civil society are the laws that are enacted by  
21 our representatives represented by those folks over there you  
22 heard from, and that those laws are enforced here.

23 And you've heard the phrase, "No man is above the  
24 law," and that's a principle that we like to live by here, you  
25 know. You have rights and responsibilities under the law; and

1 if you fulfill them, you're doing everything you promise to do  
2 today.

3 And as I said, what makes us different is we're not  
4 subject to pronouncements or directives or things that kings  
5 can make you do without having any voice in it. It's  
6 important that we organize ourselves in accordance with those  
7 rules and laws that our representatives enact for us.

8 I know we've been here for a while this afternoon,  
9 and I'm going to cut my remarks short. I do want to commend  
10 the veterans guys for what they handed out today, swag bags,  
11 because it's traditional for all of our agencies and  
12 organizations to hand out little things to commemorate this.  
13 And I thought these guys were real clever to give you a bag to  
14 put it in. I wish I'd have thought of that. The Attorney  
15 General could authorize me to do something fun.

16 Anyway, I am absolutely proud of all of you. As I  
17 said, I know it hasn't been easy. You've made us better and  
18 stronger and more diverse and richer. We love that you chose  
19 to join us. And you don't need to, when you do that, abandon  
20 all the traditions and things that you had from where you  
21 came.

22 I'd especially like to commend you to keep cooking  
23 the food that you came from because, you know, that's one of  
24 the things that makes America great is the fact you can go all  
25 over the place and eat food from everywhere. So, culturally,



1 that's a big deal to those of us with unfairly big appetites.

2           Anyway, thank you. This has been special today.

3 It's been a pleasure meeting you and hearing about your  
4 adventure and your journey and your families. And I wish you  
5 all the very best on behalf of myself, the U.S. Attorney's  
6 Office, and the Attorney General of the United States.

7           God bless you all.

8           (Applause.)

9           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

10           Well, some of you thanked me for holding this  
11 ceremony today, and it's a privilege for me to be able to  
12 preside over this ceremony. I didn't hold it; you held it  
13 because you did what was required to become citizens of the  
14 United States.

15           Your families, your friends supported you and helped  
16 you do the test and worked through that. And many of you  
17 spent many a year to get to this day, whereas on  
18 December 17th, 1966, I woke up and, as a new baby, was a  
19 United States citizen.

20           And, hopefully, we don't forget, those of us that  
21 were gifted that opportunity, what it costs, not only your  
22 work but the work of these ladies and gentlemen and their  
23 predecessors and themselves sacrificing so that they could  
24 serve and protect to maintain the rights that we enjoy and  
25 privileges that we have as United States citizens.

1           So it's my privilege to be able to preside over this  
2 ceremony because of your hard work, because of their hard  
3 work, their sacrifices, your families' sacrifices, and the  
4 support of your friends.

5           Congratulations to you, your families, friends. The  
6 importance and significance of this event to all of you cannot  
7 be overstated. Unlike many such as myself, we weren't gifted  
8 the opportunity -- we were gifted the opportunity, and you had  
9 to earn it. You've worked hard to get here and have done it  
10 the hard but right way. And your hard work and dedication to  
11 you, your families, and this country should not go unnoticed.

12           There is no perfect country or government, and the  
13 United States of America is no different. The exception is  
14 that our country was forged by immigrants who had experienced  
15 tyranny, persecution, feudalism, and oppression by their  
16 governments and were willing to sacrifice -- and many did  
17 sacrifice it all -- for the betterment of all and not just  
18 themselves. And to the detriment, frankly, of themselves.

19           These men and women formed a government unlike any  
20 other designed to serve the people, not one where the people  
21 served government. That is why it is so critical that you, as  
22 United States citizens, participate with each of us and  
23 contribute to our government because we, the people, give  
24 government its power.

25           To improve or change, we must all participate, lest

1 we stand silent and fail to exercise our rights and support  
2 our Constitution and recognize it is we, the people, who must  
3 exercise, support, and defend our rights. And if we fail to  
4 do so, we run the risk of extinction.

5 Our Constitution is simply a paper document. Without  
6 people participating, believing in, and defending it, it is  
7 rendered valueless and useless.

8 To our newest citizens, I encourage you, with your  
9 enthusiasm, skills, and talents, to make us a more diverse and  
10 talented country. Enrich our democracy and our lives. Vote  
11 and exercise your rights and freedoms. But appreciate and  
12 respect the divergent views and the beliefs that make this  
13 country what it is.

14 To remain the greatest nation on earth, we must all  
15 appreciate how and why we enjoy the freedoms we do. It is not  
16 because we all think and believe the same thing, rather,  
17 because we respect each other's diversity and freedom to have  
18 differing beliefs.

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

1                   Congratulations to you, your friends, and family.

2                   The Court will stand in recess.

3                   (Proceedings concluded at 4:52 p.m., September 9, 2024.)

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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 28 pages constitute a full, true, and correct transcript.

Dated this 10th day of September 2024.

/s/ Megan E. Strawn

MEGAN E. STRAWN  
Registered Professional Reporter  
Certified Realtime Reporter