

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

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

Casper, Wyoming  
September 12, 2022  
3:38 p.m.

DENNIS DAVE DEMIAR MERCADO;  
TERESITA ALORIA MERCADO; DENISE  
CHRISTINE ALORIA MERCADO; PETER  
ALBERT BENGT DAVIDSSON; SHINOBU  
HIRUTA DAVID; FLAVIA CARINA  
ROHRER; LEE ANN JOYCE NEWQUIST;  
SHAWN ERIC STEPHEN PARKER; JORGE  
PINA PALACIO; BRYAN JEFFERY  
AVERY; ALISHA CHOI SCHENCK;  
DHRUV PRAKASH AHUJA; SAPANA  
CHETTRI; PIA CHRISTINE  
NOTESTINE; VERONICA JOHNSON;  
SARAH JANE DIANA PRIDGEON;  
MARLIES CHARLOTTE MARGARETE  
MARIE BLACKWELL; NYUKI JANE  
SCHOTTS; WILLIAM HARUEY PHENI;  
SARA ISABEL RANGEL MORENO; MONA  
DIANE BAKER; MARTIN VILLEGAS;  
VOUCHLY DARVIAL,

Ewing T. Kerr  
Federal Courthouse

Petitioners.

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

BEFORE THE HONORABLE SCOTT W. SKAVDAHL  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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## APPEARANCES:

For the Government:       DAVID KUBICHEK  
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*Proceedings recorded by stenography; transcript produced by  
computer-aided transcription.*

(Proceedings commenced at 3:38 p.m., September 12, 2022.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye.  
The United States District Court for the District of Wyoming  
is in session. The Honorable Scott W. Skavdahl presiding.  
God save this honorable court and the United States.

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have to say  
that I have not seen this many people in this courtroom since  
about March 2000. So it's good to have everyone here, and  
welcome to our new applicants, naturalization for citizenship;  
their friends, family; and to those that got us here, the  
various patriotic organizations representing those men and  
women who have sacrificed the most.

Good afternoon, and welcome to the Ewing T. Kerr  
Federal Courthouse. The Court will suspend all rules on  
cameras and recording devices.

It is a tradition at the beginning of these  
naturalization ceremonies to recognize those citizens and  
families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate price in  
defending what so many in this world seek: the freedom and  
benefits of becoming a United States citizen.

As of this morning, 7,075 American men and women have  
been killed in action while involved in military operations in  
the Middle East. In addition, 53,337 United States military  
personnel have been wounded in action during these same

military operations.

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

(Moment of silence.)

THE COURT: Thank you.

The United States District Court for the District of Wyoming is in Special Session for the naturalization of foreign nationals to become United States citizens. It is with great honor, pride, and privilege that I am able to conduct today's ceremony, naturalizing 23 new U.S. citizens from 13 different countries around the world.

The Federal District Court of Wyoming, including Judges Johnson and Freudenthal, extend their congratulations to you, your family, and friends.

I would ask at this time if Ms. Fitzgerald with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service would make a roll call of prospective applicants for U.S. citizenship. And if you could please raise your hand to acknowledge your presence.

Ms. Fitzgerald?

MS. FITZGERALD: Good afternoon.

THE COURT: Good afternoon.

MS. FITZGERALD: Dennis Dave Demiar Mercado, Teresita Aloria Mercado, Denise Christine Aloria Mercado, Peter Albert Davidsson, Shinobu Hiruta David, Flavia Carina Rohrer, Lee Ann

Joyce Newquist, Shawn Eric Stephen Parker, Jorge Pina Palacio, Bryan Jeffery Avery, Alisha Choi Schenck, Dhruv Prakash Ahuja, Sapana Chettri, Pia Christine Notestine, Veronica Johnson, Sarah Jane Diana Pridgeon, Marlies Charlotte Margarete Blackwell, Nyuki Jane Schotts, William Haruey Pheni, Sara Isabel Rangel Moreno, Mona Diane Baker, Martin Villegas, Vouchly Darvial.

(All Petitioners raised their hands.)

THE COURT: I would note that all 23 citizens or applicants for citizenship are here and present. One of the most fundamental acts we do as citizens is pledge our allegiance to the flag of the United States. Restating that allegiance takes on special meaning when we recognize that yesterday marked the 21st anniversary of the most significant terrorist attack on United States soil.

On September 11 of 2011, 2,977 Americans lost their lives as a result of terrorist attacks in the United States.

With that in mind, let us pledge our allegiance to the flag of the United States, and if you could please rise.

(Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

THE COURT: And if you could remain standing for "The Spangled Banner."

(Singing "The Star Spangled Banner.")

THE COURT: Thank you, Colonel Johnson and the Natrona County ROTC.

Please have a seat. At this time, I would ask the Clerk of Court to play a message from the President of the United States of America.

(Message from the President of the United States.)

THE COURT: Thank you.

At this time, I would recognize Mr. David Kubichek, Wyoming Assistant U.S. Attorney, representing Merrick Garland, Attorney General of the United States.

MR. KUBICHEK: May it please the Court.

THE COURT: Counsel.

MR. KUBICHEK: Your Honor, before the Court today are a number of individual who's are here for a hearing on their petitions for naturalization. Each of them has successfully completed all of the steps necessary for eligibility for United States citizenship.

Moreover, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service has completed its process with respect to each these individuals, including the necessary background investigations.

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

Therefore, Your Honor, on behalf of the attorney general of the United States, I hereby move the district court admit each of these individuals to United States citizenship

upon their taking of the required oath.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

(Pause in the proceedings.)

THE COURT: The Court finds that each of the applicants identified has satisfied the legal requirements to become citizens of the United States of America and, therefore, grants the petition and will enter the order allowing these Petitioners to become citizens of the United States of America upon the taking of their oath.

And at this time, if you would all stand, raise your right hand, and repeat after me.

I, state your name, hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or a citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law.

I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. So help me God.

(The Petitioners repeated the oath of citizenship.)

THE COURT: Congratulations. Please join me in welcoming our new citizens.

(Applause.)

THE COURT: At this time, I'd ask the Clerk to assist me in presenting the certificates to the new citizens, and then we would hear from the patriotic organizations.

(Distribution of certificates.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Have a seat.

It's been a while, so we'll have to kind of maybe refamiliarize ourselves with this process, but there are various patriotic organizations here today to welcome you as new U.S. citizens. They derive their existence from men and women who have either themselves served or have family who have served in various wars going back to the American Revolution.

With that, I would recognize the Daughters of American Revolution, and I note that Ms. Arionus, Ms. Trumbell, Ms. Bennett, Ms. Bennet, Ms. Redmond, Ms. Gilbert, and Ms. Bodin. If you would like to come forward and present your various recognition to the new U.S. citizens.

MS. ARIONUS: Does that work? Yeah, it does.

On behalf of the Fort Caspar Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, I want to congratulate everyone, because I know it's -- there is some effort put forth to become a citizen. And congratulations on the fact that you have joined us now. And I want to welcome you, and especially, I want to mention a neighbor of mine who became a



citizen today, Lee Ann Newquist. So welcome, Lee Ann, and congratulations.

She brings me garden stuff, so she's great.

But anyway, thank you. I know you're all great, and we are so happy that you are citizens now.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Let me also recognize, on behalf of the American Legion, Mr. Welch and Mr. Seems, and the United States Council -- Veterans Council of Natrona County, Mr. Laurenz and Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, it's been a privilege and an honor for me to be in this court for you for several years, and I'm glad to be back.

I promised I wasn't going to say anything like this, but I've got to. I'm 60 pounds lighter since I seen you the last time, so I've been working on it. And --

THE COURT: Good for you.

MR. WILLIAMS: -- another young man here is also that way.

But with that said, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, our military is -- is one of the proudest organizations in the world. And these young men and women took an oath kind of like what you took today with one exception. The exception to that oath was that, if need be, they would give up their lives so you could be here today to become a citizen.

And you heard from His Honor today that 7100 of us have died in the last 12 months because of it.

The other organizations that are involved is called the American Legion. The American Legion is an organization that accepts all members of the five branches who are honorably discharged.

Following them is an organization called the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW. Exactly what it means: veterans of a foreign war. Each one of these veterans, man or woman, has served in a foreign country during combat times.

The last one is the DAV, Disabled American Veterans. A lot of these veterans have given more than most have. They've given their arms. They've given their lives. They've given their legs. And some of them have given even their mind, believe it or not.

So when you do see somebody that has served in the military, when you tell them, "Thank you for your service," they're going to smile at you, and the reason being is because they did it for their love of the country. That country is you. And we thank you so much for choosing us, because you've done something that we haven't done. You chose to be a citizen. And God bless you from our hearts. We appreciate it, and thank you, and we wish you the best.

Again, Your Honor, thank you so much. This is truly an honor for me.

Mr. Welch?

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. WELCH: Thank you, Your Honor. On behalf of the American Legion, we're the world's largest veterans organization. Been around since 1919. We chartered in Casper in 1919. So we have a long history of respecting our country, serving our country, and respecting those that choose our country.

Thank you, Your Honor.

MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Hank?

MR. LAURENZ: I'm president of the Natrona County United Veterans Council, and our great honor is to perform the funeral details for our veterans when they're fallen just from old age or even more sharper when they're fallen in war and they come home.

And in that, we find it a great honor to serve in that function. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. WILLIAMS: We know you guys are going to receive a lot of gifts today, so we'll will give you something to be able to carry them with.

THE COURT: A citizen swag bag.

MR. WILLIAMS: There you go.

(Distribution of material from Veterans organizations.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Once again, Your Honor. Thank you so

much for this opportunity.

THE COURT: Thank you for taking time to be here today and the various sacrifices you and your fellow veterans have made to this country.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the most enjoyable parts of today, in addition to swearing somebody in and have them walk out the door and not be in handcuffs, is giving a chance to you to recognize those people that might be here today supporting you or that have supported you, and you telling us one thing about today that makes it important or significant to you.

And so with that, we'd like to hear from you if you would feel comfortable in doing so. I don't want to turn you into public speakers. You don't have to feel that compelled. But I would give you the opportunity to recognize anyone here today and anything that you find significant about today's events.

And we would start with Mr. Mercado.

MR. MERCADO: Thank you very much, Your Honor.

Seven years ago, I would say, we started our journey to the U.S. with my entire family. So it wasn't a smooth-sailing journey. We're very grateful for the opportunity that we have right now, vast opportunities for my entire family, for my daughter. And so just really grateful. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. T. MERCADO: Hi. I'm Teresita Mercado. Today, this is the happiest moment of my life because this is one of my biggest dream in my life as well as my family. And I just want to say I'm so proud and honored to be a citizen of a country that is a beacon of democracy, freedom, and justice. And most of all, a country of hope, of people like us.

Thank you.

MS. D. MERCADO: Testing. There we go. Thank you, Your Honor.

Seven years of waiting. I know some people have waited longer, and to have that big change blessed our family, moving thousands of miles away from home, all thanks to a hard-working man that knew his family deserved better.

I thank my dad every day for working so hard to get us here. And now that we are officially citizens of the United States of America, we will do our civic duties and responsibilities that the majority of the world do not have the blessing to.

And I thank friends and family for supporting us throughout this difficult journey. And we will continue to speak and fight for what we believe in and to make this country a better place each day.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. DAVIDSSON: Thank you, Your Honor. That was tough to follow, but I would just like to thank my parents and my wife and my two boys, who is always there for me. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVID: I just want to thank my family to supporting me, and I'm so glad to be a citizen. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. ROHRER: Thank you, Your Honor. Thank you to my husband, my mother-in-law for all the support. I'm so proud to be American today. And thank you, to you guys, for your service. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Thank you, Your Honor.

MR. PARKER: This adventure began 14 years ago, as any good story does, in a bar in South Korea. My wife was over there teaching, and I was, too. And it took me about a year to convince her to let us go on our first date. And I'm real glad I did. She's my best friend in the world and the love of my life.

And I didn't even know what country Wyoming was in before we made our way out here. But years later, my two little boys and my little girl. And I'm very fortunate -- I was very fortunate before today, but I'm a very happy man today. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. PALACIO: Hi. I'm Jorge Pina. I live here in Gillette, Wyoming, for almost 40 years. And thank you, the United States, for letting me be a citizen. And I think I wait too much.

THE COURT: Thank you for wanting to be.

(Applause.)

MR. AVERY: I just want to say thank you to my family for supporting me for so many years. I've been here for about 21 years now. So it's very nice to finally be able to call myself an American, and I'm very proud of that. Thanks.

(Applause.)

MS. SCHENCK: I just want to say thank you, my husband, Jerry. It's been a journey and -- well, he -- he was like, Golden ticket. We were joking around. Because I came here for study, but then I wanted to stay here longer. And we ended up -- I mean, we meet -- we met, and then we dated.

So that was -- it's a kind of fun journey together. And I wanted to be, like, same nationality with my daughter and husband, so that's the reason I become a citizen today. And I'm glad. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. AHUJA: I just wanted to say thank you to my family for what they've sacrificed in these past years. It's a great honor to be here. Thank you, Your Honor.

MS. CHETTRI: Thank you. Good evening, everyone. Myself, Sapana Chettri. I'm glad to be United States citizen. Beautiful country. And I heart my -- our frontline friends, you know, their painful story. I have not like that, painful story. I'm glad, and thank you so much. I be a United States citizen, and God bless America. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOTESTINE: Thank you, Your Honor. I just want to thank my husband and my family for being here today and the ability to be an American citizen along with my son now. Thank you.

(Applause).

MS. JOHNSON: Thank you my husband, my son, for supporting me and the U.S. Government for the help. Thank you very much, Your Honor.

(Applause.)

MS. PRIDGEON: I arrived here 12 years ago for the love of my husband. And since then, I just want to say thank you to all of you over there who have supported me to get here today. I'm proud to now call myself an American. Thank you very much for the opportunity. And I'm also proud to say that you guys are definitely stuck with me.

(Applause.)

MS. BLACKWELL: I just want to say that I have been here way too long, and I finally decided to become a citizen.



So thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SCHOTTS: So I've lived here for 30 years almost, and somehow, my husband and I never got around to becoming a citizen, for me. He's -- he was an American. But after he died two years ago, suddenly it seemed important to be the same citizen -- have the same citizenship as my kids.

So I want to thank my kids for being such awesome people and sticking with us, and somehow, we've made it through the last two years.

And I want to thank my friends who are here today who really were the backbone behind our family since my husband died. And wherever he's at, I'm pretty sure he's proud of me.

(Applause.)

MR. PHENI: My name is William, and I've been waiting for this for the last eight years. And today is definitely the best day of my life. There's nothing better than becoming an American citizen, and I'm so proud to be here.

Thank you for my friends, Ryan, and everyone. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

(Applause.)

MS. MORENO: Thank you, Your Honor. My name is Sara. I've been waiting for this for a long time. I would like to thank my parents that brought us here, did a lot of sacrifices for us. My dad is in heaven now, so I'm sure he's pretty

proud of me. My husband, who also passed away in November, thanks to him, I'm standing right here. I want to thank my kids and my oldest son, who is in the Army right now.

So thank you so much.

(Applause.)

MS. BAKER: I'd like to thank my husband and my friend Judy that I met in the United States, and I'm proud to be a citizen of the United States. And I've met a lot of people here that have become family. And thank you very much. I am very proud to be a United States citizen.

(Applause.)

MR. VILLEGAS: I just want to thank -- thank you to my wife and my kids for being here and supporting me. So I'm just happy to be an American citizen. So thank you, Your Honor, too. So thanks -- thank you, everybody.

(Applause.)

MS. DARVIAL: So today I just want to say thank you so much to my husband. He is here today. And, yeah, I've been here like 13 years. So I've been scared to get my U.S. citizenship because my English is not very good, and I am scared. But today, yes, I did it, and thank you honey for coming today. Thank you so much for everybody. Thank you.

(Applause.)

THE COURT: Let me ask at this time -- one of the things that you now have the right to do and obligation as a

citizen is to vote. And while you can't vote for me or not, you can vote for our congressional representatives, our state officers, our local mayor, representatives, commissioners; and it's important you do so.

As is recognized by our newest U.S. citizen, you have to take an active role in this country. And it is important that we take that role and we do so with informed knowledge and with passion with what's best for we, the people, and the United States of America.

With that, I would recognize, on behalf of Senator Barrasso's office, Ms. Taylor and Ms. Kelly. You have some letters, I believe, to present.

And I would recognize, on behalf of Senator Lummis's office, Ms. King and Mr. French.

(Presentation of letters by Wyoming Congressional Delegation.)

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. French.

I would also recognize Gunner Kelly, who is an intern with Senator Barrasso's office, today. So thank you for being here today and handing those things out.

Ladies and gentlemen, when you don't like the way things are going, what you do is open up that material that you have and find that phone number and call. Express yourself professionally, courteously, but that's how this country works. We don't go out in the streets and fight. We

don't engage in threats. We vote. We communicate. We respect each other and the roles that we have in our government, and we participate, most importantly.

So let me recognize Mr. Kubichek for brief remarks on behalf the United States of America President and Attorney General Garland.

MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. KUBICHEK: This is a big day for each of you. As the President said, it's a big day for us. You all had to work hard to get here. You had to take tests. You had to learn stuff. You had to do a background investigation. It was an enormous effort, and the culmination of all of that is this.

Most of us here didn't have to do anything. We just got born, and we happened to draw the birth lottery. And sometimes, that causes us to take our citizenship for granted and imbues in us a certain arrogance sometimes and a certain sense of entitlement.

One of the collateral benefits of this ceremony for all of us who are here is an appreciation for really how special our good fortune was and how lucky we are that people around the world still want to be a part of us.

We don't share common race, religion. Our heritages are all mixed up. We come from all over the place, just like

you do. I mean, look around at you. You don't hardly look alike. You come from different places, different language, heritages, different religious traditions.

But you signed up to be a part of an experiment. And when we started -- and on the 17th of this month, we'll celebrate our 233rd anniversary of the Constitution of the United States, which you all swore today you would support and defend. And that's the thing that binds us together: our common belief and commitment to the system of government and the liberties represented by that document. And that's it.

And so long as we all agree with that and so long as we all agree to support that Constitution and its legitimacy, we'll keep making it. But we are an experiment, and there's no guarantee. Every single day, every single month, every single year, we have to earn it as a democracy, as a republic.

So thank you for agreeing to sign up on this voyage of discovery, if you will, in American democracy. And as the Judge said, as the President said, what you did today blesses you, but it also creates some responsibilities.

Vote, please; to listen and be informed; to respect the process as much as the outcomes. Who wins an election is less important than the fact that we have them every two years and we all get to participate. That's the important thing, and that we keep doing that and we keep respecting the outcomes of those.

But on a smaller scale, even, now that you're here and now that you're citizens and now that you're a part of the fabric of our country, participate in other ways. If you got kids in school, go to the school and volunteer once in a while. Help out.

Share your culture and your backgrounds with the rest of us, because we can learn from you. We don't know everything. A president who has been gone a fair amount of time, George H.W. Bush, had a program he initiated called The Thousand Points of Light. And what he meant by that, he wanted everybody to volunteer, do something to make the place better. And it doesn't matter what it is. Just participate. Instead of just being cabined up in your house, get out and do something to make us better.

And even on a granular level, I mean, when you're walking across the parking lot and you see a piece of idle trash laying around, pick it up and put it in the dumpster. It seems like a little thing, but if we all do little things, what happens? We add them up and add them up and add them up, and pretty soon, we got a lot of big stuff going on.

And every single day in this country, it's a challenge to make us better. Because what happens if we don't keep working to make it better? You know, just the gravitational pull. If you're not striving to make it better, it's going to start going the other way. And we all -- now,

you all signed up, so it's your obligation as much as it is mine now.

Martin Luther King gave a speech once, and he said, "The moral arc of the universe tends inevitably towards justice," and that is right so long as we all help out and participate. And that requires stuff of us, not just to vote and participate and express ourselves, but also to be tolerant. And sometimes, that's really hard to listen to opposing viewpoints and not write them off as just the, you know, crazy meanderings of somebody you just don't like.

We get better by listening to each other as well as expressing ourself and understanding each other and trying hard. We won't always agree. We don't always agree. You're sitting in a place that is based on resolving disagreement most of the time.

This is one of the happy times here when we get to do -- I have never lost an immigration motion like today, not once. I've been doing this for the better part of 30 years. I never lost one. But when I come in here on a non-citizenship day, I lose frequently, sometimes, it seems.

And that's okay. We resolve differences here. He gets to wear the black dress, so he gets to decide stuff a lot of times. Other times, you will be summoned down here to sit in this jury.

One of the most significant things about our country

is, me, as a prosecutor, I can file charges or have the grand jury file charges and bring somebody in here to stand and be subject to the judgment under the criminal law, which could cost them their liberty. I could have that happen.

But when that happens, I don't get to say they get to go to jail or they're convicted. And really, at the end of the day, neither does he. At the end of the day, who gets to decide that is a unanimous judgment of 12 people sitting up where you're sitting. Because the rule of law at the end of the day, ultimately, the judges that make the biggest decisions are citizens, because the collective judgment of a bunch of you is just better than my judgment or, on the facts, his judgment.

And that's the majesty. You're the majesty of this republic, not me as the government official or Judge Skavdahl as a member of the Judiciary. And ultimately, our commitment to that rule of law is the thing that makes us strongest and will help us endure.

Anyway, you all are special, a really handsome group of new citizens -- I will say that -- from all over the place, and we're so proud of you, and we're so grateful to you for picking us.

Thank you, and good luck with your citizenship. God bless the United States and each one of you. Thank you.

(Applause.)



THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

Well, without fail, when I sit here and get to listen to the stories of suffering and persistence and sacrifice to get to where you are today, it renews in me the good fortune and the great blessings we have to be United States citizens whether it be for one hour, one minute, one century, one decade.

It is amazing to see and refreshing, to me, to know that tears are shed for the accomplishment of becoming a citizen. And that is -- that is something that we all need to recognize and understand and appreciate. Because as a citizen, the value of my rights is dependent upon the value and recognition I place upon your rights.

If I don't value what you have in terms of rights, why should you value what I have or what I believe? And so when it gets down to it, we are Americans. We're not Republicans. We're not Democrats. We're not Libertarians. We're Americans. This is our country. We, the people.

Congratulations to you, your families, and friends. The importance to you, your family, and friends cannot be overstated. Due to the pandemic, we have conducted limited naturalization ceremonies, and today marks the first ceremony in two and a half years where we've been able to lift those restrictions and celebrate not only you but those who have sacrificed before us and continue to sacrifice and those that

have supported to you get to you where you are today.

You have waited long enough, and I'm glad we were able to conduct this ceremony. I got a call at one point in time. At first, we had 19, and then we had 20, and then we had 21. "Well, Judge, can we add another one?" Yes. Let's add as many as we can. The room is small, but I wanted to make sure anyone that was eligible was able to get sworn in.

No person or country or government is perfect. Nonetheless, hopefully, as a country, we can collectively recognize our failings and seek to improve who we are as a people and as a country.

To improve, we must all participate. Lest we stand silent and fail to exercise our rights and support our constitution and recognize it is we, the people, who must exercise, support, and defend our rights, we run the risk of extinction, just like any other government. Our constitution is simply a paper document. Without people believing and committing to it and defending it, it is rendered valueless.

Thank you for wanting to become a part of this incredible country. While the country is not perfect, for over 233 years, it has provided a sanctuary for freedom and served as an incubator for the opportunity and advancement of all.

And that reminds me, I have failed to recognize one person that has come here from Laramie, and I'm going to do

that now.

Mr. Giraldo? Are you here?

MR. GIRALDO: Yes, I am.

THE COURT: So for our entrepreneurs and those individuals that might have interests in small businesses, Mr. Giraldo is with the Small Business Administration -- that's not the exact title, but if you could tell us who you're with, and you could hand out your information.

MR. GIRALDO: Thank you, Your Honor.

My name is Nicholas Giraldo. I am the Program Manager for the Community Navigator Program. And that program, what that does is it helps entrepreneurs around the state navigate to programs that help them start -- start, grow, or rebuild their small businesses.

And so I'm really honored to be here to tell you guys about the program. I have some literature to pass to you. More stuff for your grab bag. But also, it's also a great honor personally, as well, because my father was in your guys' shoes 50 years ago. He came from Peru and -- sorry. It's very emotional because you guys -- I have the honor of calling you guys my fellow Americans.

So thank you so much. You guys have done so much, and God bless you. And I have some literature for you.

(Applause.)

MR. GIRALDO: Thank you very much.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Our newest U.S. citizens, with your energy, skills, and talents I encourage you to make us a more diverse and talented country and democracy. Vote. Exercise your rights and freedoms but appreciate and respect the divergent views and beliefs that make this country what it truly is.

This is the greatest nation on earth. But to remain so, we must appreciate how and why we enjoy the freedoms that we do. It is not because we all think and believe the same, but rather, because we respect each other's diversity of beliefs, which allows we, the people, to govern ourselves, and we, the people, adhere to the rule of law. None of us is above, and none of us is below.

You are now part of us, the richly woven fabric of the United States of America. We do not exist as individuals but a collection of many united to form a more perfect union. May it always be that way, and may God continue to bless you and the United States of America.

We'll stand in recess. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

(Proceedings concluded at 4:37 p.m., September 12, 2022.)

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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 15th day of September 2022.

*/s/ Megan E. Strawn*

MEGAN E. STRAWN  
Registered Professional Reporter  
Certified Realtime Reporter