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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0548

July 11, 2013

The Honorable Ur Jaddou
Director
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Director Ur Jaddou:

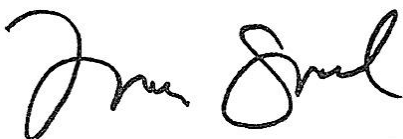
I write to express my grave concern with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) proposal that will update the naturalization test to include a new visual description test to assess English skills and a new multiple-choice format in the civics section on U.S. history and government. These proposals will add unnecessary burdens on older applications who are here to pursue naturalization and live their American Dream.

The naturalization application is one of the most important steps toward becoming a U.S. citizen, which requires legal permanent residency for many years. In its current version, during the naturalization interview, a USCIS officer will ask questions pertaining to the answers already completed in the naturalization paperwork. In addition, the current naturalization exam allows applicants to verbally answer short answers pertaining to the civics section on U.S. history and government. USCIS' proposed changes would add a speaking section of the naturalization interview where an applicant would have to describe photos of ordinary scenes to a USCIS officer. The proposal would also require applicants to read a question and select a correct answer via multiple choice for the civics section on U.S. history and government.

As someone who speaks English as her third language, I am deeply troubled with USCIS' actions that will set up aspiring citizens to fail. This new process will increase stress and aggravation for those who may not find the correct words to describe a picture during an interview. The naturalization process is already intimidating to many and the United States Government should ensure resources are being spent in more appropriate ways. As you know, many who immigrate to this country do not speak English as their first language but work very hard to learn a language that is very different from their native language. While I believe applicants must demonstrate an understanding and ability to speak, read, and write in English as well as demonstrate knowledge of U.S. history and government, I am concerned that this exam and interview change will hurt those who have lower levels of English proficiency and adults who learned English at an older age and struggle with pronunciation.

I urge USCIS to immediately rescind these proposed changes and consider other options to improve the naturalization process, such as lowering the period of residence in the United States for those who are 55 or older from the current 15 years to 10 years.

Sincerely,



Michelle Steel
Member of Congress

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of the Director
Camp Springs, MD 20588-0009



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

November 20, 2024

The Honorable Michelle Steel
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Steel:

Thank you for your July 11, 2023 letter to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding proposed changes to the naturalization test.

Since the initial announcement in the Federal Register of the proposed trial testing of a redesigned naturalization test on December 15, 2022, USCIS conducted multiple engagements with various stakeholders throughout the country, including adult educators, and received feedback and recommendations from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman and Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. We have not yet implemented the trial test. As USCIS continues to review, we will continue to administer the naturalization test that is currently administered by USCIS field offices to applicants for naturalization.

USCIS takes stakeholder feedback on all our programs and initiatives seriously and we appreciate the time all organizations took to provide feedback on the trial test. We remain committed to engaging the public to raise awareness about all our work, particularly on naturalization, and will continue these important and targeted outreach efforts.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

Ur M. Jaddou
Director