

New Americans

Magazine



Tatjana Bozhinovski

My Teacher Wished I Would Go Back To
Where I Came From

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Hello From The Editorial Desk

EDITORIAL

On the cover of this edition is Tatjana Bozhinovski, an immigrant from North Macedonia. When a teacher told Tatjana Bozhinovski that she wished she would go back to where she came from, she was shocked and embarrassed. However, the experience ultimately shaped one of the most important decisions in her life. In a compelling story, dexterously narrated, Tatjana told how she navigated her journey to becoming an influential part of the English as Second Language, ESL Department of Columbus City Schools to her current status at the ETSS Social Services as the Program Director of the Resettlement Program.

It is a Trump administration civil law enforcement priority to “prioritize and maximally pursue denaturalization proceedings in all cases permitted by law and supported by the evidence”. George Fishman of Center for Immigration Studies treats the recent discussion of the possible denaturalization of naturalized immigrants involved in terrorism, welfare fraud, or other crimes. His paper examines whether and under what circumstances a naturalized citizen might be stripped of citizenship for actions or statements that occur after he or she has become a U.S. citizen.

Retirement is a significant milestone when we bid farewell to the daily grind and look forward to enjoying the fruits of our labor. One of the essential tools for securing financial independence during retirement is the 401(k) plan. The Park National Bank communication team introduces various options available to make the most of your 401(k) and ensure a stable financial future.

The New American Community Information Center, with the New Americans Press in partnership with the City of Columbus Department of Neighborhood are in the process of ‘unleashing’ young journalists and writers into the community to report and analyze issues professionally with the Youth Media and Communication Development program. An agreement to work with the after-school program of the Youth Department of ETSS Social Services was signed recently.

In July 2026 the New Americans magazine will be celebrating 10 years anniversary. We are grateful to all who have stayed and continued to support our publication in different ways. We truly appreciate all the support.



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Tatjana

Bozhinovski

My Teacher Wished I Would Go Back To
Where I Came From

When a high school teacher told Tatjana Bozhinovski that she wished she would go back to where she came from, the experience ultimately shaped one of the most important decisions in her life. “That moment felt like a punch in the gut. I started to think that maybe I was a terrible student simply because I couldn’t understand my teacher or perform the way she expected,” Tatjana, an immigrant from North Macedonia told Deba Uwadiae, Publisher/Editor-In-Chief of New Americans magazine. Rather than dampening her spirit, Tatjana decided to dedicate her life “to helping people who come to this country from other places, so they would never have to feel the way I felt at that moment.”

I am an immigrant from North Macedonia and a dedicated nonprofit professional with over two decades of experience serving immigrant, refugee, and underserved communities. I began my career with Columbus City Schools, where I worked for 16 years in the English as Second Language, ESL Department supporting students and families while also teaching Adult English and Citizenship classes.

I later joined Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS), where I held several leadership roles before becoming the Program Director of the Resettlement Program. In this role, I lead efforts to support refugee families in achieving self-sufficiency and successful integration into their new communities. I previously served as the first state navigator for OhioKAN and continued to serve on the OhioKAN Regional Advisory Council. OhioKAN is a flexible and responsive kinship and adoption navigator program designed to assist children, caregivers, and families statewide.

I am passionate about community service and, outside of work, I enjoy volunteering, cooking, and spending time with family and friends.

America

My parents, my brother, and I came to America in 1988. Just two weeks after we arrived, I celebrated my 16th birthday. Even though we joined family here, leaving my country was very difficult for me. I left behind a life where everything was familiar—my friends, my school, and all the activities I was involved in.

Coming to America felt very uncertain. Until then, America was something I mostly knew from movies. Suddenly, I found myself in a completely new place where I understood very little of what was happening around me. I spoke almost no English, which was one of the biggest challenges.

At the same time, my parents had a vision. They came here with a plan and a strong belief that my brother and I would have better opportunities in the United States, especially as things back home were beginning to fall apart. Looking back now, I understand the courage it took for them to make that decision and start over for the sake of our future.

School

Back home, I was a strong student and was always involved in extracurricular activities. I had more friends than I could count. When I came to the United States and started school, everything changed. I only knew my cousin. I met a few Macedonian students, but they hardly spoke Macedonian, so they couldn’t really help me.

For a long time, my best friend was a green, hard-cover Macedonian-English dictionary that I bought back home. I carried it everywhere. As I walked through the hallways, I was afraid to look at other students because I worried they might say something to me, and I wouldn’t be able to respond. So, the floor tiles became very familiar to me, and I knew where every crack is.

My favorite class quickly became ESL. There, I met students from many different countries who also didn’t speak English yet. Somehow, even without a common language, we

understood each other. I was learning English quickly, but unfortunately not quickly enough for one of my teachers. One day she told me she wished I would go back to where I came from, along with others who didn't speak English. That moment felt like a punch in the gut. I remember wondering what I had done so wrong for her to dislike me so much. Why wasn't I welcome in her class? I started to think that maybe I was a terrible student simply because I couldn't understand my teacher or perform the way she expected.

That experience ultimately shaped one of the most important decisions in my life. I decided then that I would dedicate my life to helping people who come to this country from other places, so they would never have to feel the way I felt at that moment.

It was a painful experience at the time, but it also gave me a clear purpose—to make sure others feel welcomed, supported, and understood as they begin their lives in a new country.

Columbus City Schools

I spent 16 years working in the ESL Department of Columbus City Schools, and I loved every single moment of it. Having walked in the same shoes as many of the students in front of me, I made it my mission to ensure that every one of them felt loved, accepted, welcomed, and important.

It was truly inspiring to work alongside ESL staff who cared deeply about our students, no matter where they came from or how much English they spoke—or didn't speak. Our goal was always to create a place where they felt supported as they learned and grew.

From time to time, I still come across former students, and they remember me. Those moments are incredibly special and remind me why this work has always meant so much to me.

ETSS

I first learned about ETSS through a colleague I worked with at Columbus City Schools. At the time, it was only meant to be a summer job, but I quickly fell in love with the mission of the organization.

I later applied to work in the after-school program, and shortly after that I had the opportunity to teach Adult ESL classes, full time. Over the years, I held several different roles within the organization and learned so much along the way.

I have been part of the Resettlement Program since its very beginning, and in 2024 I became its director. It has been incredibly meaningful to grow with the program and continue supporting families as they begin new lives in our community.

Challenges

Since day one, I have never seen challenges as obstacles, but as opportunities to learn and grow. Through this program, I have met countless people from all corners of life, each having faced immense hardships and obstacles. Many remain stuck around the world, with no home to call their own, with cities in ruins, and with the fear of losing their lives and loved ones.

Where we once could help so many build a new life here in America—an opportunity that so many, including myself, were fortunate to have—there are now people who are barred from that chance. Many cannot be reunited with family members already here; for some, the light of hope was snatched away just as they were about to arrive. They are told they cannot dream, they cannot hope, and they cannot live a peaceful life in America.

This reality is hard to swallow. It weighs heavily on me and keeps me awake at night.

At the same time, the resources we once had to help our clients have been significantly reduced or eliminated. While this is certainly a challenge, I like to see it as a bump in the road. We may stumble, but after each fall, we rise, brush ourselves off, and keep moving forward. We continue to fight, to believe in our mission, and to support those who are here and most vulnerable.

Immigrant Community

I am so proud to be part of the immigrant community in Central Ohio. I absolutely love the vibrant colors and rich tapestry of Columbus and its surrounding areas. The true richness of this city lies in its diversity! People come from so many different places, and from each, we can learn so much. You can enjoy different cuisine every day, join dances from around the world, and hear countless languages wherever you go.

There is something special about each culture, each tradition, each language, and each individual. This is what makes Columbus great, this is what makes Ohio great, and this is what makes America great!

Unchangeable Fact

The last thing I want to say is that, although we may be going through turbulent times as immigrants and refugees, this too shall pass. America was built by people from all corners of the world—this is an unchangeable fact. While it can be difficult to turn on the TV and not hear messages suggesting we may be targeted in one way or another, I encourage everyone to stay positive and hopeful. The majority of our neighbors care for us, the majority of our coworkers enjoy working alongside us, and the majority of teachers love teaching us while also learning from us. Love always wins over hate.

What do I do with a 401(k) when I retire?

Retirement is a significant milestone when we bid farewell to the daily grind and look forward to enjoying the fruits of our labor. One of the essential tools for securing financial independence during retirement is the 401(k) plan. If you are at or nearing retirement, it's an opportune moment to explore the question: "What do I do with a 401(k) when I retire?" In this article, we'll discuss the various options available to make the most of your 401(k) and ensure a stable financial future.

1. Keep it in the 401(k)

Leaving your funds in the 401(k) is a straightforward option for retirees who are satisfied with their current plan's performance. One significant advantage is the continued tax-deferred growth, allowing your savings to compound over time. Additionally, some employers offer institutional funds with low fees and excellent investment choices, making it an attractive option for those who want to maintain a hands-off approach to their retirement investments.

However, it's essential to review your plan's terms and any potential fees associated with maintaining the 401(k) after retirement. Understanding these details will help you make an informed decision about keeping your funds in the plan.

2. Rollover to an IRA

If you seek more control and flexibility over your retirement investments, consider rolling over your 401(k) into an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). A direct rollover allows you to transfer your funds seamlessly, avoiding any tax implications or penalties.

IRAs offer a broader range of investment options, including stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and more. This diversity allows retirees to tailor their investment strategy to match their risk tolerance and financial goals. Additionally, some IRAs may come with lower fees compared to certain 401(k) plans, which can translate into more money for your retirement nest egg.

3. Annuities for guaranteed income

For retirees seeking a predictable stream of income during their golden years, annuities are worth exploring. An annuity is a financial product that provides regular



payments, often for life, in exchange for a lump sum or series of payments. This arrangement functions like a personalized pension plan, offering stability and security.

Annuities come in various forms, including fixed, variable, and indexed annuities. Each type has its unique features and benefits, so it's essential to research and consult with a financial advisor to determine which one aligns best with your financial needs and retirement objectives.

4. Take regular distributions

After decades of hard work and saving diligently, it's time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Taking regular distributions from your 401(k) can supplement other sources of retirement income, such as Social Security or pensions. This approach allows you to strike a balance between enjoying your retirement years and ensuring that your savings last throughout your lifetime.

It's crucial to adopt a sustainable withdrawal strategy to avoid prematurely depleting your retirement savings. Working with a financial advisor can help you devise a plan that aligns with your lifestyle, expected expenses, and overall financial picture.

Take the next steps

If you are approaching this milestone, it's crucial to make informed decisions about what to do with your 401(k) savings. No matter the path you choose to take, the key is to align your choices with your unique financial goals and circumstances.

Retirement planning is a complex journey, and no one-size-fits-all solution exists. Consulting with a local Park National Bank financial advisor can provide valuable guidance and ensure that your retirement years are filled with financial security and peace of mind.

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ETSS Signs Partnership Agreement with NACIC on Youth Media Development Program

A leading central Ohio nonprofit organization, ETSS Social Services has signed a partnership agreement with the New American Community Information Center, NACIC with the New Americans magazine to provide journalism and media training to youths participating in ETSS programs.

The collaboration will train the youths in basics of journalism and media communication, story development, interviewing, writing, and digital media under the Youth Media and Communication Development program of the New American Community Information Center.

Youth Media and Communication Development is a partnership program between the City of Columbus Department of Neighborhood and the New American

Community Information Center, with the New Americans Magazine to equip students with real-world skills in writing, reporting, ethics, and media literacy.

“This is an opportunity for youth to create and share their own stories and media content,” said Dr Seleshi Asfaw, Executive Director of ETSS.

Also, ETSS Director of Youth Services Amanuel Merdassa said, “this is a great opportunity to expose our youth to media and communication development experiences “.

Coordinator of the YMCD, Deba Uwadiae said the program will “empower K–12 students with foundational journalism skills, critical thinking, and ethical awareness, preparing them to become responsible and impactful journalists and storytellers in the future.”



Summer: 214 Nonprofit Organizations Receive \$17.5 million in Grant Awards from City of Columbus for Youth Programming and Community Stability

The City of Columbus has announced nearly \$17.5 million in grant awards to 214 nonprofit organizations through the city’s competitive Summer Youth Program Grants and Elevate! grant initiative.

“At a time of real uncertainty across the nation, we continue to collaborate with trusted community organizations to keep our children engaged and safe, and to strengthen the stability and prosperity of our families,” said Mayor Andrew J. Ginther.

“By partnering with nonprofit organizations in every Columbus neighborhood, we can improve lives and



community safety one summer camp, one job training program, one household at a time.”

This year, 206 organizations submitted grant applications to the city, collectively requesting \$24,882,267. The competitive application review process narrowed that field to 105 nonprofit organizations selected to receive \$7,490,500 that will offer academic advancement, career readiness, youth development, violence prevention and other programming and activities to Columbus youth.

The Summer Youth Program Grants complement youth programming offered by City of Columbus departments, including the Department of Building and Zoning Services, Department of Neighborhoods, CelebrateOne, Office of Education and the Office of Violence Prevention, budgeted at \$16.4 this year.

In 2025, city-sponsored programs recorded more than 21,000 summer camp registrations, served more than 205,000 meals and engaged tens of thousands of young people through afterschool programming, sports leagues

and outreach activities.

Summer Youth Program Grants have been a key part of Mayor Ginther’s youth engagement strategy since 2020, helping ensure that young people across Columbus have access to safe spaces, mentorship and opportunities to learn and grow during the summer months.

Elevate! is a competitive grant program focused on strengthening the capacity of established nonprofits serving Columbus and Franklin County households with incomes below the “ALICE” (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold, a measure that identifies families who earn more than the federal poverty level but still struggle to afford basic necessities such as housing, child care, food and transportation.

This year’s program will award \$10 million to 109 nonprofit organizations in Columbus and Franklin County.



The Elevate! application period opened in May and closed in June 2025, generating 189 applications. Funding decisions were based on each application’s relative performance in the city’s first-ever applicant-led peer review, allowing for scaled awards rather than requiring full funding of requested amounts. The top 10 recipients received the maximum \$200,000 award, and 35 percent of awardees received their full eligible allocation. Thirty-nine organizations are new Elevate! recipients, alongside continued investment in programs that have previously received funding.

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Distribution And Monetization Of Short Films

By Boluwatife Daniel-Adebayo

Over the years, Independent filmmakers have had limited access to well established distribution channels into theatre without the backing of major studios. With the new age, it brings a different approach to how independent filmmakers can distribute their films. In the digital age of film distribution, distribution channels into theatre for films have evolved. The introduction of streaming platforms has changed the way in which films are being consumed. Over the past decade, subscription videos on demand platforms like Netflix, Amazon, Disney, Hulu, Mubi etc. have changed the approach to the distribution of films. Viewers now have the ease of on-demand access. The ability to watch films anytime and anywhere in comparison to traditional distribution models.

Streaming platforms eliminate geographic limitations, enabling films to reach a global audience at once. They provide valuable analytics and data that can inform marketing strategies as filmmakers can access detailed viewer statistics, including demographic information and viewing habits, which can be used to tailor promotional efforts and optimize consumer expectations. This data-driven approach enables more precise targeting and enhances the potential for a film to gain traction in a competitive market. Platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo provide a direct-to-audience route but come with their own set of challenges.

YouTube's algorithm, for instance prioritizes engagement metrics i.e., listens, views and likes. The algorithm learns from human interactions and thus creates a filter bubble where users are given content that align with their previous behaviour. Most often than not, these platforms promote their original content than independent contents. The independent film, "A Sun", was a feature film that premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2019 and was nominated for the Oscars. It won 6 Awards at the Golden Horse Awards and was given a worldwide release on Netflix. Despite its awards, the film lacked promotion and thus was sidelined by the algorithm loop.

Moreover, short films face difficulties in monetizing on major streaming platforms, as they rarely benefit from ad-based revenue models or subscriber interest to the same extent as longer content. Due to their



niche theme, platforms may not be willing to offer a high royalty percentage. They may base the percentage increase on viewership of the film on the platform. This algorithmic bias can sideline short films with experimental or niche narratives. Independent platforms like MUBI, Short of the Week, and Nowness offer more hospitable environments for concept-driven shorts, often prioritizing curation over mass appeal. However, these platforms typically have limited audience reach and smaller budgets for marketing and licensing, which restricts broader exposure and commercial viability.

Mainstream platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Hulu still prioritize content with broader commercial appeal and high viewer engagement metrics. Streaming platforms also have stringent policies that they have put in place to protect and assess the content that are put on their platforms. Psychological themes that are ethically sensitive are not usually the norm of commercial mainstream platforms. Prime video in its content policy guideline have indicated that contents that glorify or promote illegal or controlled drug use are offensive content and they are not to be added to Amazon prime catalogue. Netflix on the other hand have maturity ratings on contents that are on their platform. They use the UK age rating algorithm developed by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) to generate this rating.

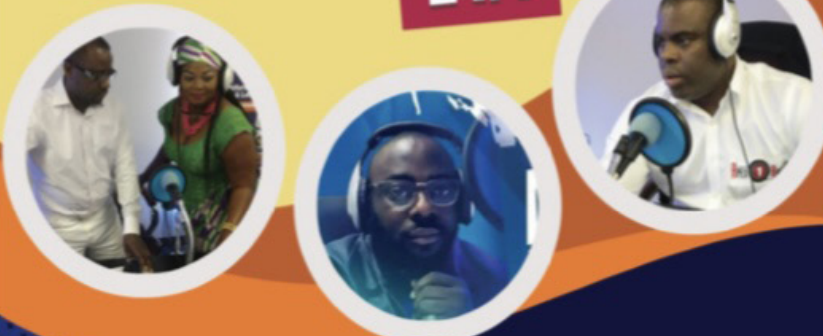
In conclusion, navigating the legal and licensing landscape is a critical aspect of distributing films in the streaming age. Intellectual Property laws play a significant role in ensuring that films are protected and that creators receive fair compensation for their work.

Boluwatife Daniel-Adebayo, a legal practitioner, has specialisation in information and technology law. He sent this piece from Lagos. He can be reached via emailboluwatife@bdalegal.org



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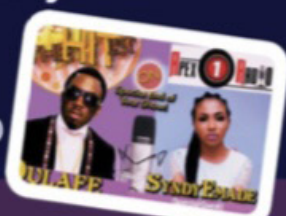
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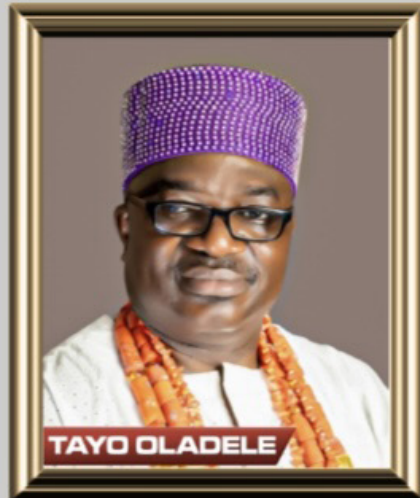
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US State Department Expands Visa Bonds for 50 Countries to Combat Illegal Overstay Rates

The State Department has expanded its visa bond program to apply to a total of 50 countries on April 2 and will require foreign nationals from these countries to post a bond of \$15,000 before receiving B1 or B2 visas for business and tourism in the United States. The bond will be returned to visa recipients who return home in compliance with the terms of the visa and the bond or do not travel.

The new countries included in the visa bond program are Cambodia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Grenada, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, and Tunisia.

These countries join 38 nations that are already included in the visa bond program. Those countries are Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Fiji, Gabon, and The Gambia.

Others are Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

B-1 Visa is a business visa for short-term business activities such as attending meetings, conferences, negotiating contracts, consulting with clients, or participating in short-term training. B-1 holders cannot engage in traditional employment or receive a salary from a U.S. organization.

B-2 Visa is a tourism visa for leisure, vacation, visiting friends or family, participating in social events, or certain medical treatments. It also allows participation in contests or events without receiving payment.

“The visa bond program has already proven effective at drastically reducing the number of visa recipients who overstay their visas and illegally remain in the United States,” according to the Office of the Spokesperson for the US Secretary of State.

22 Nonprofit Organizations Complete a 9-week Capacity Building Workshop



Twenty-two central Ohio nonprofit organizations have completed a nine-week Capacity Building training workshop organized by the ETSS Social Services and the Columbus Foundation.

The participants began the Nonprofit Capacity Building Program on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at the ETSS Main Office, 4300 E Broad Street, Suite D, Columbus, Ohio and rounded off on Wednesday, March 25, 2026.

“The workshop offered an excellent opportunity to gain new knowledge, develop practical skills, and network with leaders who brought a wealth of experience in the nonprofit sector,” said Dr Seleshi Asfaw, ETSS Executive Director.

Also, Program Coordinator, Grassroots Empowerment Initiative Tilahun Tesfaye said, “the program ran for nine weeks, concluding on March 25, 2026. Upon successful completion of the workshop, participating organizations competed for a small grant to support their work.”

The participating organizations included Abyssinia Children of Hope, American Afar Diaspora, ARDH, Burmese Community, Bete Yared, Congolese community of Columbus Ohio, Give Hope Africa, International Cultural and Relief Association, and No More Pain Initiative.

Others were Immigrants Integration, New American Community Information Center, New American Cultural Center, Immigrants Integration, Production Africa, Somaliland Community of America, Securing a Friendly, Protective Environment for Children Society, SkillHer, Shalom Curriculum Project and United Somali Roots Inc.

Participants commended the organizers of the workshop, expressing their appreciation for giving them the opportunity to learn about operating a nonprofit organization.

Mohamed Farah of the Somali Roots Inc. described the workshop as “very helpful and instructive.”

Also, Sophia Pierrelus said, “I am thankful for this opportunity. I look forward to implementing all that I have learned.”

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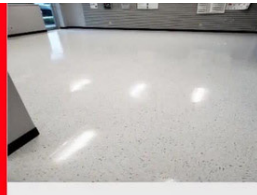


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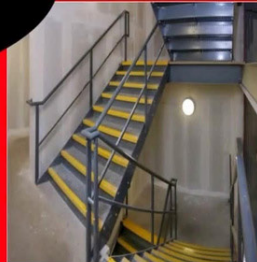
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Can Foreign-Born Citizens Be Denaturalized for Post-Naturalization Behavior and Beliefs?

By George Fishman, Center for Immigration Studies



It is a Trump administration civil law enforcement priority to “prioritize and maximally pursue denaturalization proceedings in all cases permitted by law and supported by the evidence”. There has been significant recent discussion of the possible denaturalization of naturalized immigrants involved in terrorism, welfare fraud, or other crimes. This paper examines whether and under what circumstances a naturalized citizen might be stripped of citizenship for actions or statements that occur after he or she has become a U.S. citizen.

The Constitution grants Congress alone the authority to prescribe rules for naturalization. Federal law has long required that to become a naturalized citizen, a lawful permanent resident must be “a person of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well-disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States” and must take an oath to support and defend the Constitution and renounce all allegiance and fidelity to their prior country of citizenship.

The Supreme Court has explained that “[c]itizenship obtained through naturalization is not a second-class citizenship” but “carries with it the privilege of full participation in the affairs of our society”. It has concluded that “once citizenship has been acquired, its loss can have severe and unsettling consequences”, and the government “carries a heavy burden of proof”

in a denaturalization proceeding. However, at the same time the Court made clear that “there must be strict compliance with all the congressionally imposed prerequisites to the acquisition of citizenship” and “Failure to comply with any of these ... renders ... citizenship ‘illegally procured,’ and naturalization that is unlawfully procured can be set aside.” Denaturalization does not constitute punishment. It is, rather, as a federal court has put it, an “undoing of that which should not have been done in the first place”.

Under federal law, the federal government can seek to denaturalize, or revoke the citizenship, of those who illegally procured naturalization or procured it by concealment of a material fact or by willful misrepresentation.

The Supreme Court has ruled that in a denaturalization proceeding, in order to prove that a citizen lacked attachment to the Constitution at the time of naturalization, the government must provide “‘clear, unequivocal, and convincing’ evidence which does not leave the issue in doubt”. However, the Court has seemingly indicated that Congress would have the power to substitute a lower standard of proof. It is fair to conclude that under the Constitution, naturalization may only be revoked where it was illegally procured. So, to what extent, if any, can the government revoke naturalization based on behavior engaged in or beliefs expressed post-naturalization?

As one federal court has concluded, post-naturalization behavior and beliefs “can at best rise only to the level of evidential facts” as to a citizen’s behavior and beliefs at the time of naturalization. While the Supreme Court has expressed dubiousness as to the “logical validity” of the “presumption that disqualifying views expressed after naturalization [are] accurate representations of [a citizen’s] views when he took the oath”, the Court has “not h[e]ld that evidence of subsequent acts would as a matter of law be insufficient proof of an earlier fraudulent intent”, as one federal court has put it.

<https://cis.org/Report/Can-ForeignBorn-Citizens-Be-Denaturalized-PostNaturalization-Behavior-and-Beliefs>



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