

**PRESS RELEASE and OPED MESSAGING FOR CONSTITUTION AND CITIZENSHIP DAY, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH: “Celebrate Citizenship!”**

* Tuesday, September 17th is [Constitution and Citizenship Day](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2005/05/24/05-10355/notice-of-implementation-of-constitution-day-and-citizenship-day-on-september-17-of-each-year) - a commemoration of the final passage of the U.S. Constitution by the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. It also celebrates the citizenship of those born in the United States as well as those we welcome as naturalized citizens - and the rights and privileges granted to all citizens.
* First among these rights and privileges, is of course - voting. And contained in the right of citizen voting is a clear moral and patriotic imperative for each and every one of us to protect it.
* There is no question that the security of our voting system and the confidence in our election results is of major concern to all voters of all parties and ideologies. One aspect of this is increasing worry about noncitizens voting in our federal elections and the impact it could have on outcomes.
* It is real. It [has happened](https://www.justfacts.com/news_non-citizen_voter_registration) in the past. There is [proof.](https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/19-aliens-charged-voter-fraud-north-carolina-following-ice-investigation) It will happen again in 2024 with the potential to occur on a much larger scale due to the [massive increases](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/22/what-we-know-about-unauthorized-immigrants-living-in-the-us/) in noncitizen populations in the U.S. over the last few years.
* And what does that mean for celebrating the Constitution and U.S. citizens? That the celebration of freedom that comes from the Constitution and Citizenship Day could be diminished if noncitizens (whether through deliberately or unknowingly breaking federal laws banning noncitizens voting in federal elections) are allowed to vote in the elections that determine the future direction of our country.
* Another founding document, the Declaration of Independence, states that our government derives its *“just powers from the consent of the governed*.” The way we citizens provide or withdraw that consent is through voting.
* Federal law is clear that only U.S. citizens can vote in U.S. elections. Unfortunately, these laws currently do not require proof of that citizenship, REAL ID does not indicate citizenship, and signing a federal voter application card does not demand accompanying proof of citizenship.
* Americans welcome and celebrate new citizens - especially those who come to the U.S. lawfully and go through the rigorous process of naturalization required to vote.
* But Constitution and Citizenship Day celebrates rights available *only* to current U.S. citizens. Our rights must never be diminished by votes from foreign nationals who break the law by casting ballots in our elections.
* Neither noncitizen resident aliens here legally nor illegal immigrants are [allowed to vote](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_permitting_noncitizens_to_vote_in_the_United_States) in federal elections, and none are permitted by state law to vote in state elections.
* The naturalization process is an expensive and arduous one, and one of the most serious barriers to citizenship a naturalization applicant can face is to be found to have voted in a U.S. election in violation of federal law. It is one of the first checks made in the naturalization process - did this person unlawfully vote?
* If a legal resident alien or “green card” holder votes illegally in a U.S. election, they can be immediately placed into removal procedures, jailed, and deported. The federal Board of Immigration Appeals, which has jurisdiction over these cases, has repeatedly upheld that deportation and prosecution can continue whether the noncitizen was aware or not of laws that blocked them from voting.
* The same serious and immediate actions also apply to any illegal immigrant who votes in a federal or state election.
* All noncitizen voters are subject to federal perjury charges as they had to have ticked the “I am a citizen” box on the federal registration card all states use.
* No amount of time spent living in the U.S., the depth of U.S family ties, or the pleading of an expensive immigration attorney will change the outcome. You vote unlawfully here as a noncitizen, you have forfeited any chance of ever obtaining citizenship.
* In a recent [federal indictment](https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/19-aliens-charged-voter-fraud-north-carolina-following-ice-investigation) in North Carolina, nineteen noncitizens accused of unlawfully registering to vote, and voting, are also subject to a year in jail and fines up to $100K - or both.
* Some noncitizens vote willfully knowing it is illegal, but most likely have no idea they are not given voting rights just by virtue of residing in the U.S. Many do not speak English well, come from countries with wildy corrupt elections, or are deceived or exploited by dishonest ballot harvesters who lie to them about their ability to vote here.
* Yes, laws that prevent noncitizens from registering to vote or allow their removal from voter rolls protect the citizen voters they are designed to protect.
* But they also protect noncitizen voters from casting an intentional or “accidental” vote that at best might see them fined, jailed or deported - or worse, end their quest for the U.S. citizenship they have likely struggled hard to achieve.
* Protect noncitizens. Don’t let them vote.