

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2020

The Honorable José E. Serrano  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice, Science and Related Agencies  
H-310, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce  
Justice, Science and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt:

As members of the New Americans Caucus, we respectfully ask that as you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year 2021 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, you include report language that restricts the creation of a new office at the Department of Justice dedicated to the denaturalization of American citizens. We are deeply concerned that the current administration conducted a significant reorganization without properly notifying Congress in an effort to further attack immigrants. As such, we also ask that you require the Department of Justice to report on their current caseload, evidence of need, and all other current activities surrounding the denaturalization of American citizens.

Earlier this month, the Department of Justice announced the creation of a section dedicated to investigating and litigating revocation of naturalization. The office will join the Civil Division's office of Immigration Litigation-the District Court Section and the Appellate Section. The Office of Immigration Litigation intends to address a supposedly increasing number of referrals from law enforcement agencies where they believe the defendant's naturalization was, "illegally procured" or "procured by concealment of a material fact or by willful misrepresentation...."<sup>1</sup> The *New York Times* reports that, in the last two years, Trump Administration prosecutors have filed nearly twice as many denaturalization cases than any year in the last decade, leading the administration to ask for more than \$200 million additional taxpayer dollars to investigate these cases.<sup>2</sup>

The administration claims these offices are an attempt to, "bring justice to terrorists, war criminals, sex offenders, and other fraudsters,"<sup>3</sup> but they have shown no proof that there is actually a sudden uptick in those who were fraudulently nationalized. In fact, it appears instead that this is an effort to further weaponize the federal government against immigrants. The propensity for naturalized refugees or others who have been citizens for decades to no longer have access to original documentation would make it difficult and costly to fight cases that have

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<sup>1</sup> "The Department of Justice Creates Section Dedicated to Denaturalization Cases." *The United States Department of Justice*, 27 Feb. 2020, [www.justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-creates-section-dedicated-denaturalization-cases](http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-creates-section-dedicated-denaturalization-cases).

<sup>2</sup> Wessler, Seth Freed. "Is Denaturalization the Next Front in the Trump Administration's War on Immigration?" *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 19 Dec. 2018, [www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/magazine/naturalized-citizenship-immigration-trump.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/magazine/naturalized-citizenship-immigration-trump.html).

<sup>3</sup> Department of Justice.

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been wrongly brought against them. Not only is the creation of a new office a possible violation of statute and congressional intent, it also stokes the fear that millions of naturalized American citizens could be taken from their homes and communities after having done everything right. Furthermore, it actualizes what we believe to be the true goal of the current administration: to throw up barriers to and disincentivize legal immigration.

Inserting this critical language would ensure that Congress takes a stand to protect naturalized American citizens. Denaturalization is a drastic measure that should only be taken in the most extreme circumstances. Providing further funding without any concrete proof of an increase in legitimate cases will cultivate a society where lawful citizens fear to civically engage in their communities, undermining our democracy and striking at the heart of our America's identity as a nation of immigrants.

Sincerely,



ADRIANO ESPAILLAT  
Member of Congress



NORMA J. TORRES  
Member of Congress

**ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES**

Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Ted W. Lieu  
Ilhan Omar  
Salud O. Carbajal  
Jesús G. "Chuy" García