

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2020

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Esper,

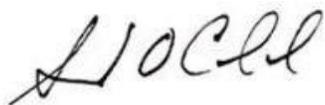
On Tuesday, August 25th, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled in the lawsuit *Samma v. U.S. Department of Defense* that the October 13, 2017 Department of Defense (DOD) policy requiring non-citizen personnel serving in the U.S. military to meet new minimum service requirements before being considered for expedited citizenship is unlawful. Per the court ruling, we urge the DOD to repeal this provision and return to previous guidance outlined in Army and Navy personnel manuals, which made lawful permanent resident (LPR) service members eligible to receive a certificate of honorable service for the purposes of expedited naturalization, without the 2017 minimum service requirements. It is important to remember that the expedited naturalization process does not vacate the required security checks and other naturalization requirements.

The court ruling proved what we already know: this policy is unlawful and contrary to the rights afforded to those who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. This is not a partisan issue; the U.S. Armed Forces has historically welcomed non-citizens to serve in its ranks and, in exchange, offer an expedited path to citizenship. As the ruling notes, non-citizens who serve during a time of war have been eligible for an expedited naturalization process, without a minimum service requirement, since World War II. Recently, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services naturalized 129,587 members of the military from October 2001 through September 2018. Additionally, given that approximately 71% of young Americans aged 17-24 do not qualify for military service, the U.S. military should welcome those who want to serve.

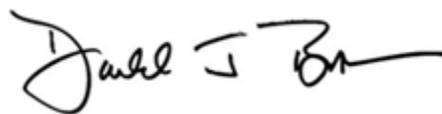
We are proud of the men and women who immigrate to the United States and decide to serve their new country with honor and distinction in the U.S. military. LPRs have proven to be as patriotic as any other service members, serving voluntarily and putting their lives on the line to protect our country, democracy, and freedom. The Department should not issue policies that make it more difficult for these selfless men and women to receive the right to naturalize through an expedited process.

We look forward to your response and urge the Department repeal the unlawful policy.

Sincerely,



Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
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Anthony G. Brown
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Jackie Speier
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Andy Kim
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Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Member of Congress