



# Impact of Naturalization & Citizenship

→ I can identify the impact of naturalization on society.

Debates about citizenship and naturalization have had a great impact on society, government and the political process. For some people, including elected officials, citizenship is a controversial topic, which means it is debated and argued over. At times, Americans have disagreed about who should be granted citizenship by naturalization and about how difficult the process should be to gain citizenship. Some people question how long an immigrant should be allowed to live in the United States without applying for citizenship. This is because some immigrants wait longer than the required 5 years to apply for citizenship.



*Stephanie Murphy was elected to represent parts of Orlando, FL in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2016. She is a naturalized citizen, and the first Vietnamese-American woman in Congress.*

**Political parties** have addressed citizenship and naturalization in their party platforms, which is a written statement of the goals of a political party. It outlines their views and plans for different issues impacting the country. Candidates running for office share their views about citizenship and naturalization to influence voters to agree with their views and vote for them.

As more immigrants naturalize and become involved in the political process, they influence society and government by voting, running for office, being elected to office and participating in lawmaking.

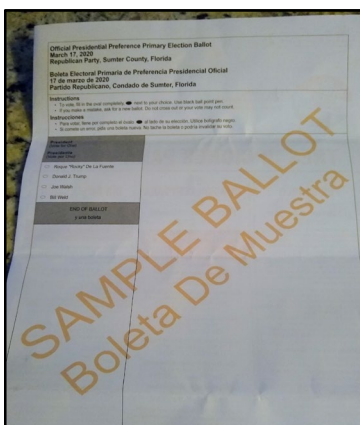
One example of the impact of citizenship and naturalization is a change made to the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. This Act was originally created to prevent discrimination in voting. No one could prevent someone from voting

based on the color of their skin, their gender, or what language they speak. This Act was amended, or changed, in 1975 to require that all languages spoken within a county by at least 5% of the people, must be included on that county's ballots. For example, at least 5% of the people living in Orange County, Florida speak Spanish, so voters can receive their ballot in Spanish or English. This requirement has made it easier for naturalized citizens from Latin American to vote because every item on the ballot is printed in Spanish.



*Mel Martinez was elected as a U.S. Senator from Florida in 2004 and was the first naturalized, Cuban-American to be a member of the U.S. Senate.*

Since the Voting Right Act was changed in 1975, more naturalized citizens from Latin America vote in elections. Also, candidates are more likely to include Spanish language commercials and posters in their campaigns to show that they are reaching out to naturalized citizens.



*Example of a Florida Spanish Sample Ballot*