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**Ellis Island, the Lincoln Memorial and National Parks  
Host Naturalization Ceremonies for Constitution Day**

PHILADELPHIA – (September 12, 2016) – Ellis Island, formerly the entry point for millions seeking a new life in America, will host the swearing-in of more than 300 immigrants as new citizens on Friday, September 16, in one of many events across the country celebrating Constitution Day 2016.

Constitution Day will be marked by naturalization ceremonies coast-to-coast where immigrants will take the Oath of Allegiance and become American citizens:

- More than three dozen naturalization ceremonies will be conducted by the federal judiciary at iconic sites through September, with most of the events on Sept. 16.
- The National Park Service, as part of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, is partnering with the U.S. Courts and hosting naturalization ceremonies at Ellis Island, the Lincoln Memorial, and Great Smoky Mountains, Yosemite, and Grand Teton National Parks, among other sites.

In addition, teachers from Hawaii to Florida have signed up classes, schools and districts to participate in the “[Preamble Challenge](#),” at which students will recite, perform and celebrate the 52-word Preamble to the Constitution (“We the People...”). Thousands of students will take part in the challenge.

These events and others were organized by the 29 partners in the [Civics Renewal Network](#), an alliance of nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations dedicated to raising the visibility of civics education by providing free, high-quality resources for teachers. Its [partners](#) include the [U.S. Courts](#), the [National Archives and Records Administration](#), the [National Constitution Center](#), the [Library of Congress](#), the NEH’s [EDSITEment!](#) project, [iCivics](#), [ConSource: The Constitutional Sources Project](#) and [Annenberg Classroom](#).

Constitution Day is observed this year on Sept. 16 because the anniversary date, Sept. 17, is a Saturday.



## Naturalization ceremonies

Naturalization ceremonies are deeply moving experiences for immigrants and their families. In the words of new citizens at last year's ceremonies:

- "Being part of a great nation, I can finally fulfill most of my son's dreams and desires..."
- "We can have whatever religion we would like and they don't judge us."
- "If you look around the world you see the impact that America makes and you want to be a part of it."
- "I'm so happy. This is one of the best days of my life."

(For more, see the U.S. Courts' 2015 [video here](#).)

This year's ceremonies on Sept. 16 include:

- **Ellis Island**, N.Y., 11 a.m. The naturalization ceremony in the Great Hall for 300 people from 53 countries will be presided over by Second Circuit Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert A. Katzmann. Media contact: Katie Tichacek, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 202-420-9581, [Katherine.Tichacek@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Katherine.Tichacek@uscis.dhs.gov).
- **Lincoln Memorial**, Washington, D.C. Time to be announced. About 100 people will be naturalized in a ceremony presided over by U.S. District Court Chief Judge Beryl A. Howell, District of Columbia. Media contact: Jim McKinney, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 202-272-1299, [James.R.McKinney@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:James.R.McKinney@uscis.dhs.gov).
- **National Constitution Center**, Philadelphia, 10:30 a.m. U.S. District Court Judge John R. Padova will administer the Oath of Allegiance to 50 immigrants from 30 countries. Media contact: Merissa Blum, 215-409-6645, [mblum@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:mblum@constitutioncenter.org).

Naturalization ceremonies also will take place at the National Archives (Sept. 14) in Washington, D.C., at Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Sept. 15) and at Grand Teton National Park (Sept. 29). Ceremonies previously occurred at the Grand Canyon for the National Park Service's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Aug. 25) and at Yellowstone National Park (Sept. 7). Media contacts: Mike Litterst, National Park Service, 202-245-4676, [mike\\_litterst@nps.gov](mailto:mike_litterst@nps.gov) and James R. McKinney of USCIS (listed above).



## Preamble Challenge

The Preamble Challenge will kick off at 8:30 a.m. at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, as Constitution Center president and CEO Jeffrey Rosen leads a group of Philadelphia students in the Preamble on the front lawn.

Across the country thousands of students will be taking part in the Challenge. Find out more about it and sign up here: <http://challenge.civicsrenewalnetwork.org/>. Follow the events and tweet and Instagram your own: **#ConstitutionDay2016**.

**Constitution Day** and Citizenship Day, on Sept. 17, commemorates the signing of the Constitution in 1787. Since the passage of the Byrd Amendment in 2004, educational institutions that receive federal funds are required to hold an educational program on the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17.

To learn more about the **Civics Renewal Network**, go to [civicsrenewalnetwork.org](http://civicsrenewalnetwork.org). On Twitter: [@CivicsRenewal](https://twitter.com/CivicsRenewal). On Twitter and Instagram: **#ConstitutionDay2016**.