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BYSIEWICZ REGISTERS 35 NEW CITIZENS TO VOTE

STATS SHOW THAT AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS, IMMIGRANTS VOTE AT LEAST AS OFTEN
AS NATURAL BORN CITIZENS

Middletown: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz marked America's Independence Day by joining Congressman Joe Courtney, Middletown Mayor Sebastian N. Giuliano, and Terrance Loomer of the Middlesex County Bar Association today at a naturalization ceremony for new citizens at Middletown's City Hall.

Some 35 new citizens from 23 countries (listed below), finished the naturalization process by taking the oath of citizenship in front of their family and friends. All of the immigrants have been living legally in Connecticut while they worked towards citizenship. After the new U.S. citizens took their oath of citizenship, Secretary Bysiewicz registered the newly eligible voters at city hall in Middletown.

"Many of these new citizens come from other countries which don't have the same democratic practices that we enjoy," said Bysiewicz. "It is incumbent upon my office and local election officials to make sure our newest citizens are welcomed to the electoral process, which is such a fundamental part of our democracy. Over the past decade my office has registered thousands of new citizens to vote and I am encouraged by statistics that show us that when new citizens are registered to vote, odds are they will."

According to census data, new citizens are less likely to vote than natural born citizens but when they're registered to vote, the disparity dramatically changes. The Immigration and Policy Center reports that in the 2000 Presidential Election, 93-percent of new citizens who were registered to vote in Connecticut actually did vote, compared to 87-percent of native-born registered voters.

On a national level, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that in the 2004 Presidential Election, 87.7-percent of naturalized citizens who were registered to vote actually voted, compared with 88.6-percent for natural born citizens.

The new citizens emigrated from the following countries: Albania, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, India, Israel, Jamaica, Macedonia, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Sri Lanka, Venezuela

Bysiewicz, Connecticut's top elections official and 72nd Secretary of the State, is also the 3rd generation descendant of immigrants from Poland and Greece.