



*Photo from Las Vegas naturalization workshop led by the Culinary Workers Union, NPNA member the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), UNITE HERE, and NPNA.*

## **Tearing Down the Second Wall Ending USCIS's Backlog of Citizenship Applications and Expanding Access to Naturalization for Immigrants**

### **Third Addendum to Second Wall Report**

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## Acknowledgements

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## About The National Partnership for New Americans

The National Partnership for New Americans is a national multiethnic, multiracial partnership. We represent the collective power and resources of the country's 37 largest regional immigrant and refugee rights organizations in 31 states. Our members provide large-scale services—from DACA application processing to voter registration to health care enrollment—for their communities, and they combine service delivery with sophisticated organizing tactics to advance local and state policy. We exist to leverage their collective power and expertise for a national strategy.

We believe America's success is rooted in our ongoing commitment to welcoming and integrating newcomers into the fabric of our nation, and to upholding equality and opportunity as fundamental American values.

To learn more about the National Partnership for New Americans, visit [partnershipfornewamericans.org](http://partnershipfornewamericans.org).

## Tearing Down the Second Wall

### Ending USCIS's Backlog of Citizenship Applications and Expanding Access to Naturalization for Immigrants

#### Diego Iñiguez-López, National Partnership for New Americans

In the last year, over 925,000 people applied for citizenship in the United States.<sup>1</sup> For many, this was years after coming to this country in search of a better life, becoming an integral part of communities across the nation, learning English, working hard, and contributing to their families and the economy. The right to naturalize is a right as old as the nation itself and was envisioned by its founders, created by the Constitution, and codified by federal law.<sup>2</sup> It has also long contributed to the diversity, richness, and strength of the nation.

Unfortunately, since the Trump administration took control of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the federal agency that processes citizenship applications, the backlog of pending naturalization applications has skyrocketed to 729,400, with processing rates reaching as high as 20 months. The newest data from USCIS represents a 87.59% increase above the backlog of 388,832 applications, on December 31, 2015, during the administration of President Obama.<sup>3</sup>

As detailed in an October 2017 report by the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), and its February 2018 update, this backlog serves as an effective "second wall" that prevents eligible lawful permanent residents (LPRs) from becoming citizens and voters.<sup>4</sup> The eligible LPRs in the backlog have all been lawfully present in the United States for at least 5 years, have generally paid a naturalization application fee of \$730, have submitted a 21 page application, and have provided their fingerprints for a security background check. They are waiting to take their citizenship exam, a test of their knowledge of English and United States history and government, that they must pass in order to take the Oath of Citizenship. The naturalization backlog places the applicant in a precarious situation, during which they are vulnerable to the administration's aggressive agenda of immigration enforcement, including arrest, detention, and deportation, despite having a legal pathway to citizenship.

In response, NPNA is demanding that USCIS take aggressive steps to reduce the backlog of citizenship applications and reduce the waiting time for applicants down to six months.

<sup>1</sup> "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Const. Art. I, § 8, cl. 4; 8 U.S.C. §§ 1103, 1421, 1423, 1427, 1443, 1447, 1448; 8 C.F.R. §§ 103, 310, 312, 316, 332, 336, 337.

<sup>3</sup> "Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, by Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, October 1 - December 31, 2017," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400\\_performancedata\\_fy2018\\_qtr1.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400_performancedata_fy2018_qtr1.pdf); "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.

<sup>4</sup> Gelbaum, Emily, "Building a Second Wall: USCIS Backlogs Preventing Immigrants from Becoming Citizens," National Partnership for New Americans, October 27, 2017, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B82Awla7Wla\\_bktuYmVzMkNfUHM/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B82Awla7Wla_bktuYmVzMkNfUHM/view); Gelbaum, Emily, "NPNA Report Update," National Partnership for New Americans, February 7, 2018, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qye5ejHU5L0qs7sjycXysLrktqH5qk/view>.

## USCIS continues failure to address citizenship applications backlog in Fiscal Year 2018.

The newest data from USCIS, which provides information for the first quarter of fiscal year 2018 (FY18 Q1, covering October 1 to December 31, 2017), shows an enormous backlog of 729,400 applications for citizenship.<sup>5</sup> This represents an 87.59% increase in the backlog of citizenship applications over the last two years.<sup>6</sup>

As recently as December 31, 2014, the backlog was as low as 380,639.<sup>7</sup> In the first quarter of fiscal year 2017 (FY17 Q1, covering October 1 to December 31, 2016), there were 636,164 pending applications.<sup>8</sup> The next quarter, FY17 Q2 (January 1 to March 31, 2017), the first with the Trump administration in power, saw an increase to 744,106 pending applications for citizenship.<sup>9</sup> Although the newest data shows a slight decrease in the backlog, less than one percent, compared to the last quarter, FY17 Q4, the backlog in citizenship applications remains enormous. If USCIS continues to reduce the backlog at this rate, it would take almost 25 years to get back down to the Obama administration's backlog level of 380,639 applications in 2015, not taking into account new applications.<sup>10</sup>

The states with the largest numbers of pending citizenship applications are California with 137,538 applications, Texas with 97,788 applications, New York with 94,491 applications, Florida with 87,722, New Jersey with 30,896 applications, Illinois with 26,072 applications, Georgia with 19,819 applications, and Pennsylvania with 17,953 applications.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, by Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, October 1 - December 31, 2017," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400\\_performancedata\\_fy2018\\_qtr1.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400_performancedata_fy2018_qtr1.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.

<sup>7</sup> "Number of N-400 Applications for Naturalization by Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, October 1 - December 31, 2014," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400\\_performancedata\\_fy2015\\_qtr1.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400_performancedata_fy2015_qtr1.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> "Number of N-400 Applications for Naturalization by Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, October 1 - December 31, 2016," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400\\_performancedata\\_fy2017\\_qtr1.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400_performancedata_fy2017_qtr1.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> "Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, by Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, January 1 - March 31, 2017," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400\\_performancedata\\_fy2017\\_qtr2.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400_performancedata_fy2017_qtr2.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.

<sup>11</sup> "Number of N-400 Applications for Naturalization by Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location October 1 - December 31, 2014," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400\\_performancedata\\_fy2015\\_qtr1.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/N400_performancedata_fy2015_qtr1.pdf); "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.

**Despite decrease in citizenship applications received by USCIS, the agency decreased its processing of applications, and increased its denial of applications.**

The newest data shows that although the number of applications received by USCIS is down by almost 12 percent from the previous quarter, USCIS processed 27% fewer applications.<sup>12</sup> In FY18 Q1, covering October 1 to December 31, 2017, USCIS increased the backlogs in at least 19 states and territories, including Alabama, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.<sup>13</sup> The states that suffered the largest increase of pending citizenship applications over the last fiscal year are Utah with an increase of over 53 percent, Texas over 50 percent, Tennessee over 47 percent, Washington over 46 percent, Kansas over 44 percent, Iowa over 39 percent, Colorado over 37 percent, and Minnesota over 35 percent.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the increasing backlogs, the amount of a time a person waits for an application to be processed by USCIS is many times arbitrary and lacks geographic uniformity. For example, over the last quarter, Florida saw a five percent decrease in its citizenship application backlog while its neighboring state of Alabama saw its own backlog increase by over 213 percent.<sup>15</sup>

Certain states also saw enormous spikes in denial of applications over the last quarter. Alabama saw an increase in denials of 310 percent, Hawaii 51 percent, Nevada 49 percent, New Mexico 44 percent, Pennsylvania 60 percent, and Utah at 44 percent.<sup>16</sup>

**The backlog of citizenship applications at USCIS indicates either extreme incompetence or malevolent voter suppression, and serves as critical tool in the Trump Administration's attacks on immigrant communities.**

This backlog in USCIS's processing of citizenship applications comes during a period when the Trump administration has made all undocumented immigrants an enforcement priority and aggressively escalated the arrests, detention, and deportations of immigrants, including against those with lawful permanent residency.<sup>17</sup> The Administration has increasingly targeted immigrants who have some sort of immigration status or relief from enforcement action, including rescinding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, terminating Temporary Protected Status for over 314,000 immigrants, and making it harder for people to

<sup>12</sup> "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Exec. Order No. 13768, 82 Fed. Reg. 8799 (January 25, 2017); "The End of Immigration Enforcement Priorities Under the Trump Administration," American Immigration Council, pp. 1-2, March 2018, [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/the\\_end\\_of\\_immigration\\_enforcement\\_priorities\\_under\\_the\\_trump\\_administration.pdf](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/the_end_of_immigration_enforcement_priorities_under_the_trump_administration.pdf); Miroff, Nick, and Maria Sacchetti, "Trump Takes Shackles off ICE, Which is Slapping Them on Immigrants Who Thought They Were Safe," Washington Post, February 11, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-takes-shackles-off-ice-which-is-slapping-them-on-immigrants-who-thought-they-were-safe/2018/02/11/4bd5c164-083a-11e8-b48c-b07fea957bd5\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.6d37b4bb44b6](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-takes-shackles-off-ice-which-is-slapping-them-on-immigrants-who-thought-they-were-safe/2018/02/11/4bd5c164-083a-11e8-b48c-b07fea957bd5_story.html?utm_term=.6d37b4bb44b6).

apply for asylum, including survivors of domestic violence.<sup>18</sup> The response of the administration to the backlash over its policy of separating arriving families has been to expand family detention, attempt to exempt itself from the Flores settlement, which governs the treatment of detained migrant children, and direct federal departments and agencies, including the military, to assist in detaining families.<sup>19</sup>

Within this context of constant assaults on immigrants of all immigration statuses, the USCIS backlog of citizenship applications is, effectively, a “second wall” that prevents LPRs from naturalizing and voting, as envisioned by the Constitution and federal law.

The backlog also reflects a larger shift within USCIS. In February 2018, the agency changed its mission statement, removing the phrase “nation of immigrants” and removing the commitment to promote “an awareness and understanding of citizenship.”<sup>20</sup> The mission change also removes any reference to applicants as “customers,” distinguishes applicants, including LPRs who are eligible for citizenship, from “Americans,” and implies that serving immigrants who are applying for benefits, and serving “Americans” is naturally in conflict.<sup>21</sup> The new mission statement causes concern that the leadership of USCIS sees itself as a purveyor of a nativist agenda that seeks to limit immigrants’ participation and contributions to the United States.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, the agency’s most recent initiative to denaturalize individuals has a chilling effect on legal residents seeking naturalization and puts limited USCIS resources into increasing enforcement rather than inviting access to statutorily created benefits. In June, the agency announced that it will be launching an office and hiring dozens of attorneys and immigration officers to review cases to determine whether denaturalization procedures should be instituted.<sup>23</sup> This investment in enhancing enforcement at the cost of decreasing the enormous citizenship backlog serves to promote fear of naturalizing rather than provide greater access to an important benefit, naturalization.

These changes within USCIS are not isolated. Recent reports show that L. Francis Cissna, director of USCIS, is part of a working group, made up of senior policy advisor to the Trump administration, Stephen Miller, and

<sup>18</sup> Shear, Michael D., and Julie Hirschfeld Davis, “Trump Moves to End DACA and Calls on Congress to Act,” *New York Times*, September 5, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/05/us/politics/trump-daca-dreamers-immigration.html>; “Temporary Protected Status (TPS),” Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., accessed May 14, 2018, <https://cliniclegal.org/tps/>; “Credible Fear: A Screening Mechanism in Expedited Removal,” *Human Rights First*, February 2018, [https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Credible\\_Fear\\_Feb\\_2018.pdf](https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Credible_Fear_Feb_2018.pdf); Hesson, Ted, and Josh Gerstein, “Sessions Moves to Block Asylum for Most Victims of Domestic, Gang Violence,” June 11, 2018, *Politico*, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/11/jeff-sessions-asylum-standards-domestic-violence-614158>.

<sup>19</sup> Exec. Order No. 13841, 83 Fed. Reg. 29435 (June 20, 2018); Stillman, Sarah, “Trump’s Executive Order Creates a New Border Crisis,” June 21, 2018, *The New Yorker*, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-new-border-crisis-following-trumps-executive-order>.

<sup>20</sup> Gonzales, Rich, “America No Longer a ‘Nation of Immigrants,’ USCIS Says,” *NPR*, February 22, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/22/588097749/america-no-longer-a-nation-of-immigrants-uscis-says>; Lind, Dara, “America’s Immigration Agency Removes ‘Nation of Immigrants’ from its Mission Statement,” *Vox*, February 22, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2018/2/22/17041862/uscis-removes-nation-of-immigrants-from-mission-statement>.

<sup>21</sup> Lind, Dara, “America’s Immigration Agency Removes ‘Nation of Immigrants’ from its Mission Statement,” *Vox*, February 22, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2018/2/22/17041862/uscis-removes-nation-of-immigrants-from-mission-statement>.

<sup>22</sup> Gonzales, Rich, “America No Longer a ‘Nation of Immigrants,’ USCIS Says,” *NPR*, February 22, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/22/588097749/america-no-longer-a-nation-of-immigrants-uscis-says>.

<sup>23</sup> Taxin, Amy, “US launches bid to find citizenship cheaters,” *Associated Press*, June 12, 2018, <https://apnews.com/1da389a535684a5f9cd0da74081c242f3>.

officials from several executive departments, that has been meeting for months in order to plan new attacks against immigrants, through executive authority and regulations, in advance of the November midterm elections. Almost all of the policy changes that the working group is considering would involve USCIS.<sup>24</sup> These reports suggest that Cissna is committed to the Trump administrative agenda against immigrants, including lawful permanent residents who have pending applications before USCIS.

There is precedent for immigration law to be used with racial animus in United States history. The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited those who could apply to citizenship to "free white person[s]."<sup>25</sup> In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act banned Chinese workers, authorized their deportation, and barred any Chinese immigrant residing in the country as of 1880 from naturalizing.<sup>26</sup> The Immigration Act of 1917 extended the restriction of entry to most Asian countries.<sup>27</sup> The 1921 Emergency Quota Act established nation-based quotas, and the Immigration Act of 1924 restricted more than a two percent increase of groups, based on the 1890 census, as a means of limiting Eastern and Southern Europeans, many of whom were Jewish, and Asian immigrants, who, at that time, were targets of anti-immigrant animus and the growing influence of eugenists.<sup>28</sup> It wasn't until 1965 that Congress eliminated the nation-based quota system by passing the Immigration and Nationality Act, during the civil rights movement and efforts to eliminate the federal government's perpetuation of discrimination.<sup>29</sup>

However, due to the incessant USCIS backlog in citizenship applications, the federal government is continuing to prevent immigrants, a large amount of whom are people of color, from naturalizing. In 2016, the top ten countries of birth for naturalized citizens were Mexico, India, the Philippines, China, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Colombia, El Salvador, and Jamaica.<sup>30</sup> These ten countries comprised 49 percent of all naturalized citizens in 2016.<sup>31</sup> The continued backlog not only discourages citizenship-eligible immigrants from applying, but echoes this nation's lowest historical points, when policymakers used immigration laws on citizenship to exclude people based on their race, ethnicity, religion, and where they came from. The country can and should do better.

The newest USCIS data on citizenship suggests either extreme incompetence at USCIS, or a decision to create barriers for lawfully present immigrants to become voting citizens. This "second wall" goes hand in

<sup>24</sup> Cook, Nancy, "Trump Aides Plan Fresh Immigration Crackdowns Before Midterms," Politico, June 18, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/18/trump-aides-plan-fresh-immigration-crackdowns-before-midterms-652246>.

<sup>25</sup> An Act to Establish a Uniform Rule of Naturalization, 1 Stat. 103, 1 Cong. Ch. 3 (1790).

<sup>26</sup> Chinese Exclusion Act, ch. 126, 22 Stat. 58 (1882).

<sup>27</sup> Immigration Act of 1917, Pub. L. No. 301, 39 Stat. 874 (February 5 1917); "Chapter 1: The Nation's Immigration Laws, 1920 to Today," Pew Research Center, p. 14, September 25, 2018, [http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2015/09/2015-09-28\\_modern-immigration-wave\\_REPORT.pdf](http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2015/09/2015-09-28_modern-immigration-wave_REPORT.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Act of May 19, 1921, Pub. L. No. 5, 42 Stat. 5; Immigration Act of 1924, Pub. L. No. 139, 43 Stat. 153 (1924); Cobb, Jelani, "Trump's Move to End DACA and Echoes of the Immigration Act of 1924," The New Yorker, September 5, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/trumps-move-to-end-daca-and-echoes-of-the-immigration-act-of-1924>.

<sup>29</sup> Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-236, 79 Stat. 911 (1965); Zeitz, Josh, "The 1965 Law that Gave the Republican Party its Race Problem," August 20, 2016, Politico, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/08/immigration-1965-law-donald-trump-gop-214179>.

<sup>30</sup> Zong, Jie, Jeanne Batalova, and Jeffrey Hallock, "Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States," Migration Policy Institute, February 8, 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#Naturalization>.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

glove with the other extreme anti-immigrant policies of the current administration, and our nation's history of using immigration law to implement racial animus.

### Tearing Down the Second Wall

In response to the increasing backlog, NPNA and our partners in the Naturalize NOW Campaign are launching a national campaign, in conjunction with the release of this report update, to reduce the backlog and the waiting time for USCIS to process applications to six months, consistent with past practice, and to encourage naturalization for the millions of eligible LPRs.

To achieve these objectives, NPNA and the Naturalize NOW Campaign partners are:

1. Building a coalition of elected officials, community partners, labor unions, faith institutions and other stakeholders to demand a reduced wait time for naturalization applications;
2. Recruiting a growing group of Congressional members to inquire and apply scrutiny so that USCIS is accountable to the public;
3. Filing a Freedom of Information Act request to increase transparency within the agency;
4. Facilitating and uniting Mayors, cities, and community-based organizations in order to increase naturalization events and other efforts; and
5. Continuing to analyze and report on USCIS data on the backlog of citizenship applications.

### July 2018 Key Findings:

- As of the end of FY18 Q1, there are 729,400 pending applications for citizenship before USCIS. That's a slight decrease, .65 or less than one percent, compared to the last quarter, even though applications are down by almost 12% nationwide.
- Despite the decrease in applications, USCIS decreased the number of applications processed nationally by 27 percent.
- If USCIS continues to reduce the backlog at this rate, it would take almost 25 years to get back down to the Obama administration's backlog level of 380,639 applications in 2015, not taking into account new applications.
- The backlog of 729,400 citizenship applications represents an 87.59% increase above the backlog of 388,832 applications, on December 31, 2015, during the administration of President Obama.
- As of the end of FY18 Q1, the states with the largest numbers of pending citizenship applications are California with 137,538 applications, Texas with 97,788 applications, New York with 94,491 applications, Florida with 87,722, and New Jersey with 30,896 applications.
- USCIS increased their backlogs of pending applications in several states and territories, including Alabama, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- The states that suffered the largest increase of pending citizenship applications between the FY17 Q4 and FY18 Q1 are Alabama with over 213 percent, Maine with over 13 percent, and Rhode Island with almost 12 percent.
- The states that suffered the largest increase of pending citizenship applications over the last fiscal year, between FY17 Q1 and FY18 Q1 are Utah with an increase of over 53 percent, Texas over 50 percent, Tennessee over 47 percent, Washington over 46 percent, and Kansas over 44 percent.



- Although applications received by USCIS decreased nationwide, a few states saw slight increases in applications in the last quarter, including Arkansas, Iowa, and Maine.
- Certain states have seen enormous spikes in denial of applications over the last quarter: Alabama saw an increase of 310 percent, Hawaii over 51 percent, Nevada over 49 percent, New Mexico over 44 percent, Pennsylvania over 60 percent; and Utah over 44 percent.<sup>32</sup>

#### Data Analysis from NPNA in Appendix:

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<sup>32</sup> "Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-n-400-application-naturalization>.