

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4858

To permit remote oath ceremonies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2021

Mrs. TORRES of California (for herself, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Mr. CORREA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To permit remote oath ceremonies, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Remote Naturalization
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NATURALIZATION OATH**
7 **CEREMONIES.**

8 The Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101
9 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 337 the fol-
10 lowing:

1 **“SEC. 337A. REMOTE OATH CEREMONIES.**

2 “(a) REMOTE OATH CEREMONIES.—Not later than
3 30 days after the date of the enactment of this section,
4 the Secretary of Homeland Security shall establish proce-
5 dures for the administration of the oath of renunciation
6 and allegiance under section 337 using remote
7 videoconferencing, or other remote means for individuals
8 who cannot reasonably access, understand, or use remote
9 videoconferencing, as an alternative to an in-person oath
10 ceremony.

11 “(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—Notwithstanding sec-
12 tion 310(b), an individual may complete the naturalization
13 process by participating in a remote oath ceremony con-
14 ducted pursuant to subsection (a) if such individual—

15 “(1) has an approved application for naturaliza-
16 tion;

17 “(2) is unable otherwise to complete the natu-
18 ralization process due to—

19 “(A) the cancellation or suspension of in-
20 person oath ceremonies during—

21 “(i) a national emergency declared by
22 the President under the National Emer-
23 gencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.);

24 “(ii) an emergency or major disaster
25 declared by the President under the Robert

1 T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency
2 Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.);

3 “(iii) a public health emergency de-
4 clared by the Secretary of Health and
5 Human Services under section 319 of the
6 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
7 247d); or

8 “(iv) any emergency that, in the judg-
9 ment of the Secretary of Homeland Secu-
10 rity, is appropriate for the cancellation or
11 suspension of such ceremonies; or

12 “(B) the inability of the individual to at-
13 tend the ceremony in person; and

14 “(3) elects to participate in a remote oath cere-
15 mony in lieu of waiting for an in-person ceremony.

16 “(c) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—Upon estab-
17 lishing the procedures described in subsection (a), the Sec-
18 retary of Homeland Security shall—

19 “(1) without undue delay, provide written no-
20 tice to individuals described in subsection (b)(1) of
21 the option of participating in a remote oath cere-
22 mony in lieu of a participating in an in-person cere-
23 mony;

24 “(2) to the greatest extent practicable, ensure
25 that remote oath ceremonies are administered to in-

1 individuals who elect to participate in such a ceremony
2 not later than 30 days after the individual so noti-
3 fies the Secretary; and

4 “(3) administer oath ceremonies to all other eli-
5 gible individuals as expeditiously as possible after
6 the end of the public health emergency referred to
7 in subsection (b)(2).

8 “(d) CLARIFICATION.—Failure to appear for a re-
9 mote oath ceremony shall not create a presumption that
10 the individual has abandoned his or her intent to be natu-
11 ralized.

12 “(e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year
13 after the date of enactment of this section, and each year
14 thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall sub-
15 mit a report to Congress that identifies, for each State
16 and political subdivision of a State, the number of—

17 “(1) individuals who were scheduled for an in-
18 person oath ceremony that was cancelled due to an
19 emergency described in subsection (b)(2)(A);

20 “(2) individuals who elected to participate in a
21 remote oath ceremony in lieu of an in-person public
22 ceremony;

23 “(3) individuals who completed the naturaliza-
24 tion process by participating in a remote oath cere-
25 mony; and

1 “(4) remote oath ceremonies that were con-
2 ducted in the previous year.

3 “(f) FUNDING.—In addition to any funds appro-
4 priated to carry out this section, the Secretary of Home-
5 land Security may use funds from the Immigration Ex-
6 aminations Fee Account under section 286(m) to carry
7 out this section.”.

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