

AUTOMATIC CITIZENSHIP ISN'T UNIQUE

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Body

The statement

"Why do we have **automatic citizenship** upon birth? We're the only country in the world that has it."

Glenn Beck on June 10 on his Fox News program

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The ruling - FALSE

Fox News' Glenn Beck raised an immigration hot button that has gained some legislative traction, the issue of whether the United States ought to continue to grant **citizenship** to any child born in this country, even if the parents are illegal immigrants.

"You know, the anchor baby thing has always really hacked me off," Beck said. "You know the anchor baby. You know what that is. It's when a child that is born here becomes a citizen and they help the illegal parents become citizens, right?"

In April, Rep. Nathan Deal, a Republican who is also a candidate for governor of Georgia, proposed H.R. 1868, the Birthright **Citizenship** Act of 2009. It seeks to amend immigration law so that babies born in the United States would be granted **citizenship** only if one of the parents is a U.S. citizen or national, is a legal permanent resident or is serving in the U.S. armed forces. The legislation currently has 77 co-sponsors, 76 Republicans and one Democrat.

Every year, about 400,000 babies are born to mothers who are undocumented immigrants in the United States, according to Jon Feere, a legal policy analyst at the Center for Immigration Studies.

Our aim is not to enter the fray over the proposed legislation, but to check Beck's claim that the United States is the only country that grants **automatic citizenship** to anyone born in the country.

And to that end, we refer to a report from NumbersUSA, a group dedicated to reducing immigration levels, and which backs Deal's bill. The group found that in addition to the United States, 33 other countries offer **automatic, unconditional citizenship** to children born within their borders.

They offer several qualifiers. No Western European nations grant birthright **citizenship**. Canada is the only developed nation other than the United States to do so. No nation in the group, other than the United States, has more than 200 million people. Only the United States, Pakistan and Mexico have 50 million or more.

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We might be inclined to cut Beck some slack if the only other countries were St. Lucia, Antigua and Lesotho. But Canada, Brazil, Romania, Argentina? It might be surprising to Americans that **automatic citizenship isn't** more common, but the bottom line is that Beck made a blanket statement that is wrong. We rate it False.

Graphic

PHOTO (2)

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