

H.R.2759 (VARGAS) THE NATURALIZATION AT TRAINING SITES (NATS) ACT OF 2017

POSITION: The Chamber's Defense, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee voted to SUPPORT H.R.2759 on August 2, 2017.

STATUS: H.R.2759 was introduced by Congressman Juan Vargas on May 26, 2017. It was referred to the House Armed Services Committee on May 26, 2017.

AT-A-GLANCE

H.R.2759 would ensure that servicemembers are well informed of the naturalization options available to them through a variety of mechanisms.

SUMMARY

H.R.2759 would ensure that servicemembers are well informed of the naturalization options available to them. This bill would:

1. Direct each branch of the Armed Forces to establish a naturalization office at their initial training sites
2. Instruct the Secretary of Defense to identify and contact non-citizen service members and inform them of their options
3. Require the Department of Defense (DOD) to retain trained staff at the established naturalization offices
4. Encourage the Secretary to assign non-citizen recruits to training sites with operating naturalization offices pending the completion of said offices at all training sites

ANALYSIS

The Chamber continues to be an enthusiastic supporter of the military and veteran communities in the San Diego region. H.R.2759 would support veterans by potentially providing a pathway to naturalization. According to the author, failing to naturalize can put these individuals at risk of deportation and of being permanently barred from becoming citizens. If veterans are able to remain in San Diego, they can have a positive impact on our regional economy by adding to our local workforce. The Chamber believes that we owe it to servicemembers who have given so much to our country the opportunity to become naturalized, and supporting H.R.2759 could provide a pathway to that.

The Chamber remains supportive of a legal path toward citizenship in the United States as well as comprehensive immigration reform that promotes efficient borders. Immigrants comprise nearly one-third of the labor force in San Diego County, contribute to about 25 percent of the region's GDP, and immigrant households make up 22 percent of the total household income in San Diego County, which represents a substantial share of spending power. Enhancement of our regional and national economy can be achieved through a well-trained and plentiful work force, and safe and efficient borders.