THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
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September 13, 2023

The Honorable Mark Takano
U.S. House of Representatives
2078 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Elvira Salazar
U.S. House of Representatives
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Takano and Congresswoman Salazar:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of The American Legion, I write to express support for H.R. 4569, the *Veteran Service Recognition Act of 2023.* This bipartisan legislation honors the sacrifices of our immigrant servicemembers by enhancing opportunities to become U.S. citizens and preventing their unjust deportation from the country they swore an oath to defend.

There is no greater commitment to citizenship to this country than to honorably serve our nation in uniform – a commitment 45,000 non-citizen immigrants within the U.S. Armed Forces do each day. Unfortunately, many men and women who served honorably are leaving the military without citizenship, facing an overly burdensome naturalization process or facing deportation.

Every day, 45,000 immigrants actively serving in the U.S. Armed Forces risk their lives in support of our country. While military service can offer an expedited pathway to naturalization, many non-citizens leave the military without becoming a U.S. citizen because of unclear or onerous requirements they must meet. Many veterans have stated they were informed their service automatically awarded citizenship. Furthermore, many believe the military services did not adequately articulate the expedited citizenship process, resulting in veterans pursuing the complex path to citizenship with little assistance or guidance.

Men and women who served honorably should not face undue barriers to citizenship or face deportation from the country they served or fought to defend. Congress must act to ensure our nation honors the service of non-citizen immigrants who have honorably served our nation.

For more than 100 years, The American Legion has advocated for our nation's honorable non-citizen servicemembers and veterans who seek a legal path toward citizenship. Today, we are proud to continue fighting for this honorable cause by extending our support to H.R. 4569, *the Veterans Service Recognition Act.*

Thank you for working to address this critical issue in the veteran community.

For God & Country,

Daniel J. Seehafer
National Commander