

**Naturalization Speech: Camille Stephant, Longfellow Middle School (8th grade), Jan. 2020**

Thank you,

First I would like to congratulate you on becoming our nation's newest American Citizens! I am sure that every one of you worked remarkably hard to reach this milestone in your American Dream and to hear those words, so I shall say them again; Congratulations American Citizens. This is a day that will not only be cherished by your friends and families but in the minds of many Americans. We welcome you, admire you, and honor you, as immigration built the United States. Today you are gathered with men and women from diverse parts of the world to celebrate your citizenship. You may have come from swarming cities or simple suburbs. You may have evaded affliction or a corrupt government. You may have come here for a new life, a job, to be with family... You don't look alike. You don't live the same life, but no matter how you got here, or where your journey began, as of now, you are an American. And while you might have gone to sleep last night not being an American, as you sleep tonight, you are. And although I can't promise anything, you are turning the page to begin a new chapter in your life.

The United States is a place where every one of you can be a part of something bigger. A place to contribute abilities and opinions. To find new opportunities and achieve ambitions. To be proud and remember your heritage. While you've put in the work required to become a citizen, you still have a critical and rewarding task ahead of you. You have rights and responsibilities. Whether it is voting or deciding fate in a courthouse. Defending our country or simply going to school and blossoming ideas from what they could be to what they will be. Our government depends on citizens like you being involved. Of understanding that you are part of this nation, you have a voice. We are coming together to shape our country's course. And today, as all of you become new American citizens, you are helping the US write the next chapter of your new home and I look forward to seeing what stories you write in the big book that is our beautiful nation. Welcome to your happily-ever-after, welcome to the land of the free and the home of the brave, welcome to the United States. Thank you!