



Legislation Text

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Proposed Res. No. 844-A

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and President Bush to sign legislation that would facilitate naturalization of members of the United States military and immediate relatives of citizen soldiers killed in action.

By Council Members Rivera, Avella, Clarke, Fidler, Gennaro, Jackson, Jennings, Katz, Koppell, Liu, Monserrate, Nelson, Quinn, Sears, Serrano, Stewart, Weprin and de Blasio

Whereas, Much of our success as a nation -- much of the peace and prosperity we take for granted -- is due to the hard-fought success of our armed forces during World War II, men of remarkable strength and character whose tremendous sacrifices helped shape the modern world, individuals whose legacy has ensured the safety, progress and success of our country for generations to come; and

Whereas, This is particularly true of our country's "Green Card Soldiers," men and women who have not yet earned the rights and benefits of United States citizenship but may serve in our armed forces nonetheless; and

Whereas, Today, approximately 37,400 troops serving on active duty are legal immigrants; their growing ranks build upon a rich legacy of military service among American immigrants and their commitment to our nation reflects the tremendous pride and patriotism that exists within our immigrant communities; and

Whereas, However, many of these dedicated servicemen and women encounter real difficulties obtaining United States citizenship; the cost of naturalization is burdensome to many immigrants in the military, as these men and women are typically among the lowest in pay and in rank and are frequently deployed to difficult assignments abroad; and

Whereas, In an executive order last July, President Bush eliminated the requirement that immigrants in the armed forces live in the United States for three years before they could apply for citizenship; and

Whereas, Despite this executive order, the process to become a citizen can still take months, even years to complete; and

Whereas, Each house of Congress recently passed its own legislation that would reduce barriers to naturalization for many immigrants who serve in the armed forces; and

Whereas, Legislation passed by both houses of Congress would shorten the amount of time a person must serve in the armed forces to be eligible for naturalization; would prohibit charging eligible members of the armed forces fees for naturalization; and would protect immigrant family members of citizen soldiers who die in or as a result of combat; and

Whereas, Differences in the legislation passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate must be resolved before Congress can pass the legislation and send it to the President for signature; and

Whereas, Immigrant soldiers are fighting selflessly for the democratic ideals that

have defined this great nation; these committed individuals fight to preserve the

democratic rights and privileges of all American citizens, rights to which -- as immigrants --

they do not yet have full access; and

Whereas, The legislation currently under consideration in Washington will help

individuals who are dedicated to this country by facilitating the process by which they can become United States citizens; and

Whereas, Members of both houses of Congress should work to resolve their differences and pass legislation reducing barriers to citizenship for members of the armed forces as soon as possible; and

Whereas, President Bush should sign such legislation at the earliest possible time; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and President Bush to sign legislation that would facilitate naturalization of members of the United States military and immediate relatives of citizen soldiers killed in action.

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