

NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES - NOVEMBER 18, 2020

LATEST STATISTICS

Number Of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Among ICE Staff And Detained Immigrants

By U.S. Immigration And Customs Enforcement – November 17, 2020

As of **November 13, 2020**, the total detained population is: **16,693¹**. There have been **391** confirmed cases of COVID-19 among those in ICE custody as of **November 15, 2020²**. To date, there have been **62,080** total detainees tested.

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
Atlanta Field Office			
Charleston County Detention Center	0	0	2
Columbia Regional Care Center	0	0	1
Folkston ICE Processing Center	4	0	72
Irwin County Detention Center	1	0	44
Robert A. Deyton Detention Center	1	0	2
Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center	0	0	1
Stewart Detention Center	2	3	375
Baltimore Field Office			
Worcester County Jail	0	0	1
Boston Field Office			
Bristol County Detention Center	0	0	1
Cumberland County Jail	1	0	1
Franklin County House of Corrections	0	0	7
Strafford County Corrections	0	0	2
Wyatt Detention Center	0	0	3
Buffalo Field Office			
Buffalo (Batavia) Service Processing Center	0	0	50
Chicago Field Office			
Chase County Detention Facility	18	0	78
Clay County Justice Center	15	0	17
Lincoln County Detention Center	0	0	1
McHenry County Adult Correctional Facility	0	0	5
Montgomery County Jail	0	0	1
Morgan County Detention Center	1	0	1
Pulaski County Detention Center	14	0	94
Dallas Field Office			
Bluebonnet Detention Facility	1	0	320
Eden Detention Center	2	0	54
Johnson County Law Enforcement Center	0	0	1
Kay County Detention Center	0	0	1

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
Dallas Field Office Cont'd			
Moore Detention Center	1	0	29
PrairieLand Detention Facility	9	0	111
Rolling Plains Detention Center	0	0	56
Denver Field Office			
Aurora Contract Detention Facility	30	0	121
Detroit Field Office			
Calhoun County Correctional Center	19	0	38
Geauga County Jail	0	0	1
Monroe County Jail	1	0	1
Morrow County Correctional Facility	3	0	51
Saint Clair County Jail	0	0	11
El Paso Field Office			
Cibola County Correctional Center	0	0	1
El Paso Service Processing Center	37	0	287
Otero County Processing Center	1	0	182
Torrance County Detention Center	0	0	55
Houston Field Office			
Coastal Bend Detention Center	0	0	12
Houston Contract Detention Facility	1	0	149
IAH Polk Adult Detention Facility	6	0	31
Joe Corley Detention Center	1	1	51
Montgomery Processing Center (Houston)	0	0	219
Los Angeles Field Office			
Adelanto ICE Processing Center	0	0	242
Miami Field Office			
Baker County Detention Center	1	0	5
Broward Transitional Center	3	0	156
Glades County Detention Center	1	1	178
Krome North Service Processing Center	5	0	204
Larkin Behavioral Health Center	0	0	2
San Juan Staging Facility	0	0	1
Wakulla County Jail	3	0	40
Newark Field Office			
Elizabeth Detention Center	1	0	19
Essex County Jail	0	0	8

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
New Orleans Field Office			
Adams County Correctional Center	7	0	101
Alexandria Staging Facility	16	0	172
Allen Parish Detention Center	2	0	12
Catahoula Correctional Center	0	0	119
Etowah County Jail	0	0	22
Hancock County Jail	1	0	1
Jackson Parish Correctional	9	0	109
LaSalle ICE Processing Center - Jena	1	0	77
LaSalle ICE Processing Center - Olla	0	0	25
Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center	0	0	65
Richwood Correctional Center	9	0	125
River Correctional Center	9	0	56
South Louisiana Correctional Center	0	0	3
Winn Correctional Center	4	1	241
New York City Field Office			
Bergen County Jail	0	0	6
Hudson County Jail	0	0	14
Philadelphia Field Office			
Cambria County Prison	0	0	11
Pike County Correctional Facility	2	0	24
York County Prison	9	0	111
Phoenix Field Office			
CCA Florence Correctional Center	23	0	53
Eloy Federal Contract Facility	1	0	258
Florence Detention Center	2	0	77
La Palma Correctional Facility	14	0	458
Salt Lake City Field Office			
Cache County Jail	5	0	15
Henderson Detention Center	5	0	22
Nevada Southern Detention Center	1	0	12
Nye County Jail	6	0	45
Washington County Jail	1	0	4
San Antonio Field Office			
El Valle Detention Facility	32	0	90
Karnes County Family Residential Center	0	0	89

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
San Antonio Field Office Cont'd			
Laredo Processing Center	0	0	7
LaSalle County Regional Detention Center	0	0	1
Limestone County Detention Center	0	0	56
Port Isabel Detention Center	4	0	172
Rio Grande Detention Center	1	0	162
South Texas Family Residential Center (Dilley)	3	0	8
South Texas ICE Processing Center (Pearsall)	21	0	237
Webb County Detention Center (CCA)	4	0	92
San Diego Field Office			
Imperial Regional Detention Facility	0	0	3
Otay Mesa Detention Center (San Diego CDF)	9	1	191
San Luis Regional Detention Center	2	0	21
San Francisco Field Office			
Golden State Annex Facility	0	0	2
Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center	0	0	59
Seattle Field Office			
Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC)	2	0	18
St. Paul Field Office			
Douglas County Corrections	0	0	1
Freeborn County Adult Detention Center	1	0	5
Linn County Jail	0	0	2
Phelps County Jail	0	0	2
Polk County Jail	0	0	15
Sherburne County Jail	2	0	2
Washington D.C. Field Office			
Caroline Detention Facility	0	0	41
Immigration Centers of America - Farmville	0	1	339
TOTAL	391	8	7,249

¹ ICE's FY 2019 Average Daily Population was 50,165.

² "Currently under isolation or monitoring" includes detainees who tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently in ICE custody under isolation or monitoring. This number excludes detainees who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and were either returned to the general population after a discontinuation of medical monitoring/isolation or are no longer in ICE custody.

³ "Detainee deaths" includes those who have died after testing positive for COVID-19 while in custody; COVID-19 may not be the official cause of death.

⁴ "Total confirmed COVID-19 cases" is the cumulative total of detainees who have tested positive for COVID-19 while in ICE custody since testing began in February 2020. Some detainees may no longer be in ICE custody or may have since tested negative.

There have been 45 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among ICE employees working in ICE detention facilities.

1 at Adelanto ICE Processing Center (Adelanto, CA)
 15 at Alexandria Staging Facility (Alexandria, LA)
 2 at Aurora Contract Detention Facility (Aurora, CO)
 1 in Bergen County Jail (Hackensack, NJ)
 1 at Butler County Jail (Hamilton, OH)
 1 at El Paso Processing Center (El Paso, TX)
 2 at Elizabeth Contract Detention Facility (Elizabeth, NJ)
 1 at Eloy Detention Center (Eloy, AZ)

1 at Essex County Correctional Facility (Newark, NJ)
 1 at Florence Correctional Center (Florence, AZ)
 2 at Houston Contract Detention Facility (Houston, TX)
 1 at Hudson County Jail (Kearny, NJ)
 2 at La Salle ICE Processing Center (Jena, AL)
 11 at Otay Mesa Detention Center (San Diego, CA)
 2 at Stewart Detention Center (Lumpkin, GA)
 1 at T. Don Hutto Residential Center (Taylor, TX)

There have been 153 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among ICE employees not assigned to detention facilities.

❖ Data Source: <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus>

LATEST NEWS

Judge Rules Border Agents Can't Use COVID-19 Order To Expel Migrant Kids

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez – CBS News – November 18, 2020

❖ A federal judge on Wednesday [November 18] ordered border authorities to stop expelling migrant children without letting them seek humanitarian refuge, dealing a severe blow to a pandemic-era policy the administration has used to curtail legal protections for minors in U.S. immigration custody. In a two-page order, Judge Emmet Sullivan of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia said unaccompanied migrant children who are taken into custody by border officials must be afforded the safeguards Congress established for them and placed in shelters overseen by the government during their immigration proceedings. Since mid-March, U.S. officials at both land borders have been summarily expelling most migrants who lack valid travel documents, sending them to Mexico, Canada or their home countries without affording them the opportunity to see an immigration judge or talk to an asylum officer. By the end of September, authorities along the U.S.-Mexico border had carried out more than 200,000 summary expulsions, including more than 9,000 unaccompanied minors. Wednesday's [Nov. 18] order does not prohibit officials from continuing to expel adults or families with children.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/judge-border-agents-covid-19-order-expel-migrant-kids-immigration/>



Children and workers at a tent encampment in Tornillo, Texas.

Photo Credit: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Mexico Pays U.S. In New Deal To Jail Or Fine People Caught Cutting Border Fence

By Anna Giaritelli – Washington Examiner – November 18, 2020

❖ The U.S. government collected its first fine as part of a new bilateral deal that forces Mexico to prosecute anyone who damages the fence along one part of the southern border and send penalties collected to the United States. "We just collected the first fine," said Gloria Chavez, the former Border Patrol chief in El Centro, California, who spearheaded the initiative. "It was like \$600. The person paid the fine in lieu of going to jail in Mexico for damaging the border wall." American and Mexican leaders reached a deal a year ago this week to start arresting, prosecuting, and seeking damages from anyone caught attempting to destroy border barrier in southeastern California, where the Border Patrol made \$396,000 worth of repairs at 1,300 cuts in its fence in fiscal 2019, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) told the Washington Examiner. The 2019 fiscal year ran from Oct. 1, 2018, through Sept. 30, 2019. On Nov. 22, 2019, CBP's Office of Chief Counsel and the Mexican government reached a deal to go after fence cutters in court and send any fines derived from prosecutions back to the U.S. The Mexican government recently began prosecuting suspects caught on its side of the border across from southeastern California. It marks the first time the countries have partnered to reimburse U.S. border authorities, who must take money out of their budgets to fix the fence after the nightly breaches. Cuts to the fence were happening every night, and repairmen were constantly on the border fixing new ones from the previous night, Chavez said. The U.S. has recouped \$1,273 in four instances in which Mexico prosecuted people for attempting to blow-torch or saw through older mesh and scrap-metal fencing that was installed during the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations. Another 15 cases are before the Mexican courts.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/mexico-pays-us-in-new-deal-to-jail-or-fine-people-caught-cutting-border-fence>

Migrant Smugglers See Boost From U.S. Pandemic Border Policy

By Laura Gottesdiener and Sarah Kinosian – Reuters – November 12, 2020

- ❖ These days, Martin Salgado's migrant shelter in the city of San Luis Rio Colorado on Mexico's border with the United States feels more like an hourly hotel. His guests, many of them from Central America, often don't even bother to spend the night. Salgado said he has never seen people cycle through as repeatedly as he has in recent months, after the United States began expelling almost all migrants caught on the Mexican border rather than returning them to their homelands. Now, human smugglers often attempt to get migrants back across the border the very same day they are deported, he said. Previously, Central American migrants apprehended at the border would be processed in the U.S. immigration system and would often be held for weeks, if not months, before being deported back to their home country. U.S. President Donald Trump's administration in March announced that it would begin to quickly expel nearly all migrants caught at the border under the authority of an existing federal public health act, known as Title 42, saying the move was necessary to prevent coronavirus spreading into the United States. But the order appears to be having unintended effects. It's led to an increase in repeated border crossing attempts, data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection shows. And it's benefiting the illegal networks that move people from Central America to the United States, according to interviews with more than a dozen migration experts, shelter directors, immigrant advocates and human smugglers. That is because U.S. authorities are depositing the migrants on the border, rather than returning them home, which allows smugglers to eliminate some of the costs of repeat border crossings, said three smugglers working with transnational networks. The price migrants pay smugglers, which can be \$7,000, or double that, often includes two or three attempted border crossings to offset the risks of being intercepted by Mexican or U.S. authorities, according to the three smugglers, as well as migration experts.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN27S24A>



Central American migrants are seen inside an enclosure where they are being held by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), after crossing the border between Mexico and the United States illegally and turning themselves in to request asylum, in El Paso, Texas, U.S. Photo Credit: Jose Luis Gonzalez/Reuters

DETENTION CENTERS

Mexico To Stop Holding Child Migrants In Detention Centers

By Christopher Sherman – Associated Press – November 12, 2020, 12:33 PM

- ❖ The United Nations and other organizations are applauding changes to Mexico's immigration law that would prohibit holding migrant children in immigration detention centers. International and domestic groups have pressured Mexico for years to stop holding children in detention centers with their parents. Under the reforms, children would also have their legal status provisionally recognized to avoid the risk of immediate deportation before having the opportunity to explore possibilities of seeking protective status. The changes come after a year in which Mexico detained more child migrants than ever before. Families, especially from Central America, were crossing Mexico to arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border during the first half of 2019. The United States government made it increasingly difficult for asylum seekers to pursue their cases at the border and pressured Mexico to take a more aggressive approach to slowing the flow of migrants north. Various U.N. agencies said these were the most important reforms Mexico had made in the area since 2014 and would bring the country in line with a number of international treaties. The new laws took effect Wednesday [November 11] when they were published in the official register. Under the changes, Mexico shifts responsibility for housing child migrants and their families to the country's family development agency and away from the National Immigration Institute, which is responsible for immigration enforcement and runs the detention centers. In a statement Thursday [November 12], the International Detention Coalition and the Institute for Migrating Women, said that last year Mexico detained more than 50,000 child migrants, mostly from Honduras and Guatemala. That was up 82% from 2018. Between January and August this year, another 7,442 child migrants were detained.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/mexico-stop-holding-child-migrants-detention-centers-74171665>

ICE Is Trying To Deport Immigrant Women Who Witnessed Alleged Misconduct By A Gynecologist

By Adolfo Flores – BuzzFeed News – November 11, 2020

- ❖ Attorneys and advocates working with immigrant women who allege they underwent overly aggressive, unwanted, or medically unnecessary gynecological procedures in ICE detention said federal investigators are excluding witnesses and setting them up to be deported. The number of immigrant women who allege they underwent nonconsensual or medically unnecessary gynecological procedures at the hands of Mahendra Amin while detained at the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia, has grown to at least 43. Of those, 17 women remain detained and only one has received a request by federal investigators to be interviewed, according to Caitlin Lowell, a law student at Columbia Law School's Immigrants' Rights Clinic who is working with this group of detainees. Seven of the 17 women are set to be deported by ICE in the next two weeks without speaking with investigators, Lowell said. In a statement, ICE said any implication that the federal immigration enforcement agency has been attempting to impede the investigation by conducting deportations of those being interviewed is "completely false." But that leaves out women who attorneys said were victims of the gynecologist who have not been interviewed or who the Justice Department may choose to not interview, Lowell said. The current setup, Lowell said, allows the federal government, which is investigating allegations of abuse done to women while under its care, to deport potential witnesses. Since the whistleblower complaint that included allegations about unwanted gynecological procedures was filed with the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) in September, at least six women who allege they were victims of Amin have been deported, according to Lowell. Four spoke briefly with the Justice Department and two did not. One woman, Lowell said, had her deportation hold removed right after she conducted one interview with investigators during which she didn't go over everything. The woman had a second interview Tuesday, but Lowell was told her deportation is still scheduled for an unknown date. In a statement, ICE said it was fully cooperating with the investigation being conducted by DHS OIG and the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/adolfoflores/ice-deporting-gynecologist-witnesses>

COURT RULINGS

DACA Is Restored After Court Rules DHS Head Served Illegally

By Michelle Hackman – Wall Street Journal – November 15, 2020

- ❖ A federal judge in New York invalidated administration rules narrowing the program that protects immigrants living in the U.S. since childhood without legal permission, ruling the restrictions were improperly issued. The ruling Saturday [November 14] restores the program, called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, to near-full operation, after multiple attempts by the administration to end or curtail it. That means, for the first time since September 2017, new applicants who weren't previously eligible, typically because they were too young, may now apply. The DACA program was created by the Obama administration in 2012 to protect the young immigrants, known as Dreamers, who have been living in the country without legal permission since childhood, and has been the subject of legal battles for the past three years. In June, the Supreme Court ruled the administration's first attempt to end the program didn't follow the proper procedure required for federal policy-making. The following month, acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf issued a memorandum narrowing the program to existing applicants, who would be offered renewals of only one year, rather than two, and closing the program to any new candidates. The move was intended as an intermediate step while the administration considered whether to make another attempt to end the program entirely, as the Supreme Court had allowed it could do. That memo was the subject of the latest round of litigation. The judge, Nicholas G. Garaufis of the Eastern District of New York, ruled it was improperly issued because Mr. Wolf hadn't been properly appointed to his acting position. The ruling is the fifth to find that Mr. Wolf is serving illegally in his acting role, following a Government Accountability Office report that found Mr. Wolf and his predecessor, Kevin McAleenan, both had been improperly appointed under federal law on job vacancies. Judge Garaufis said the ruling applies to anyone who might qualify for DACA under the 2012 memo establishing the program, issued by then-Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. The ruling doesn't apply to a small subset of people who are plaintiffs in other DACA lawsuits.



DACA recipients and supporters rallied in celebration of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the program last month outside of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in Phoenix.

Photo Credit: Thomas Hawthorne/The Republic via REUTERS

- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/federal-judge-invalidates-trump-administration-s-daca-rollback-11605400169>

DEPORTATIONS

Harris County OKs \$2.5M To Help Poor Immigrants Fight Deportations

By Zach Despart – Houston Chronicle – November 10, 2020

- ❖ Harris County Commissioners Court on Tuesday [November 10] approved \$2 million for a taxpayer-funded legal services program for poor immigrants facing deportation, as well as \$500,000 to assist those who are crime victims secure special visas reserved for that purpose. The court voted 3-2 along party lines, with the Democrats in support, to fund the program the group approved in February. The goal is to end the practice of indigent immigrants representing themselves in deportation proceedings, which a county memo said results in defendants being removed from the country when they often have a legal right to remain. "When you have a family at a deportation hearing and they don't have an attorney, they're deported at a much higher rate, like 90 percent of the time, compared to like 5 percent of the time when they do have an attorney," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, who proposed the program. The two Republican commissioners, Jack Cagle and Steve Radack, opposed the deportation defense fund. They argued that Harris County should not get involved in federal immigration issues. The pair did join the Democrats in supporting \$500,000 to help immigrant crime victims, though the majority rejected a proposal by Cagle to shift some of that money to a similar program in the district attorney's office. The Houston area, which has about 500,000 people in the country illegally, had been the largest in the country without an immigration defense fund. Austin, Dallas and San Antonio have similar programs. Just over \$2 million will go to the deportation fund, which also will pay for an employee within the Community Services Department to oversee the program. The county originally had estimated the program would cost \$500,000. It will be paid for out of the tax-supported general fund.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Harris-County-OKs-2-5M-to-help-poor-immigrants-15717330.php>

BORDER WALL

Trump's Border Wall Builders Carry On Even Though Projects May Never Be Completed

By John Burnett – NPR – November 16, 2020

- ❖ "Every single day, the Department of Homeland Security continues to dynamite, to blow up these rugged mountains in order to clear a path for a wall that, in all likelihood, will never be built," says Laiken Jordahl, with the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, Ariz. "So now it's just destruction for destruction's sake." The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees the wall project, said it expects contractors to continue work through the remaining two months of Trump's term and "will not speculate on actions the administration may or may not take." Currently, 11 different contractors are at work on 27 separate construction contracts, including the demolition in Arizona, according to the Army Corps. So far, \$8 billion has been spent, part of the \$15 billion that has been set aside for the gargantuan project — more than the price tag for a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. Last month, acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf stood in the shadow of the iron bollard wall in the Rio Grande Valley to announce the completion of nearly 400 miles since Trump came into office. "While this is an important milestone, we're building even more wall," Wolf said. "Currently we have nearly 210 more miles under construction and expect to complete 450 miles by the end of this calendar year." And the pace is quickening. In the week after the election, government lawyers filed a "motion for immediate possession" against an elderly landowner in Mission, Texas, to quickly seize a strip of his family's ancestral land to raise the border wall. "We're still seeing filings," says Roberto Lopez, community organizer with the Texas Civil Rights Project that represents the property owner. "And the government isn't stopping or slowing. It seems like they're trying to speed up." Another case in point is the Salineño Wildlife Preserve on the banks of the international river in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. "The Salineño preserve in Starr County — which is 2 1/2 acres of some of the best bird habitat, brings in birders from all over the country and the world — has been acquired by the Army Corps of Engineers and is set to be destroyed for the border wall," says Scott Nicol, a longtime conservation activist in the region. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) says the sale was completed on Election Day, Nov. 3. After a public outcry over the voluntary sale, the Valley Land Fund, which owns the preserve, announced that it had decided to cancel the whole deal and fight the government to keep out the bulldozers. A CBP statement said the property "is necessary for the execution of planned border barrier in support of U.S. Border Patrol's operational requirement in the Rio Grande Valley." A spokesman added that the agency, at present, has no plans to stop construction of the border wall because of the incoming administration. In Texas, where most of the borderlands are in private hands, the progress of the wall has been slowed by the tedious condemnation process that winds through federal court. The government has signed four contracts to build 121 miles of wall in the Laredo region, for instance, but they haven't acquired a single acre of land to erect it on.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/16/934784015/trumps-border-wall-builders-carry-on-even-though-projects-may-never-be-completed>

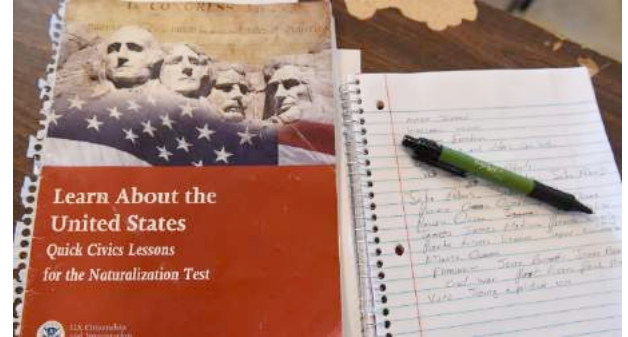
DEVELOPING STORIES

U.S. Citizenship Test Adds More Questions, Draws Criticism

By the Associated Press – November 13, 2020

❖ An updated U.S. citizenship test will require applicants to answer more questions than before and could slow down the number of tests held each day, experts said. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) agency on Friday [November 13] announced the updated test now has 128 civics items to study and will require applicants answer 20 questions instead of 10. To pass, applicants must answer 12 correctly, or 60%. That's the same pass rate as before. The new test also removes geography questions and alters prior ones, such as requiring applicants to name three branches of government instead of one. It also changes the answer to a question on whom U.S. senators represent from “all people of the state” to “citizens in their state,” which has drawn criticism over its accuracy. Sarah Pierce, a policy analyst at the D.C.-based, nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute, said that the changes to the naturalization test would possibly triple the amount each Citizenship and Immigration Services officer spends testing applicants. Pierce said that under previous rules, applicants could potentially only answer six of 10 questions if they gave all the correct answers, but now applicants must respond to 20 questions even when they already got 60% of them correct. “These changes reduce the efficiency of this already struggling agency,” Pierce said, referring to its citizenship application backlog. “The administration is adding hundreds of thousands of more minutes to these naturalization exams.” Citizenship and Immigration Services spokesman Dan Hetlage said the new test “covers a variety of topics that provide the applicant with a more well-rounded testing experience.” People who apply for naturalization on or after Dec. 1 will take the new version of the test. The test is one of the very final steps in obtaining American citizenship, a monthslong process that requires immigrants to have permanent legal residency for at least five years before applying. More than 840,000 immigrants became U.S. citizens during the 2019 fiscal year, up 11 percent from a year earlier, according to U.S. government statistics. In recent years, the average wait time for an applicant to naturalize has also grown. It was nearly 10 months in the 2019 fiscal year compared with fewer than six months three years prior. The government lists estimated naturalization processing times on its website of between 14.5 and 26 months in Houston and 16.5 and 32 months in New York.

❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-10b67c54222b6b91483982edb5dba05c>



In this June 16, 2016, file photo, a US citizenship test review booklet and notes are seen during a citizenship test preparation class in Perris, California.

Photo Credit: Robyn Beck/AFP via Getty Images