

THANK YOU, MIKE, FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION.

GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE! THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE WITH US.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO THANK AND RECOGNIZE CHAIRMAN MONESTIME AND COMMISSIONER LEVINE CAVA FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE INITIATIVE THAT I AM HERE TO ANNOUNCE TODAY.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE STAFF OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S MAIN LIBRARY FOR PROVIDING THIS BEAUTIFUL SPACE FOR TODAY'S SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND CEREMONY.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CONTINUES TO SUPPORT OUR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY AND TO ASSIST AS MANY OF OUR RESIDENTS AS POSSIBLE WITH THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS. HAVING ACCESS TO THE PROPER RESOURCES AND TOOLS MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

WE HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ARE DOING SOMETHING THAT NO OTHER COUNTY HAS DONE BEFORE...

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS THE FIRST PARTNERING COUNTY IN THE "CITIES FOR CITIZENSHIP INITIATIVE."

THIS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FLORIDA IMMIGRANT COALITION AND “CITI” (CITY) WILL ALLOW US TO CREATE THE “OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.”

THIS OFFICE WILL CONNECT ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANTS WITH THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO HELP THEM NATURALIZE. THIS OFFICE WILL ALSO PROVIDE FINANCIAL AND LEGAL COUNSELING TO OUR PERMANENT RESIDENTS.

THROUGH “CITIES FOR CITIZENSHIP,” MIAMI-DADE COUNTY WILL WORK TO ENSURE THAT OUR RESIDENTS ARE ABLE TO ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COUNTY’S DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC ECONOMY.

AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, MIAMI-DADE IS THE VERY FIRST COUNTY TO JOIN NEARLY 20 CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN THIS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN, WHICH AIMS TO INCREASE CITIZENSHIP AMONG ELIGIBLE U.S. PERMANENT RESIDENTS.

THIS INITIATIVE IS SO IMPORTANT TO OUR COUNTY -- WHERE OVER HALF OF OUR 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS WERE BORN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES AND ABOUT 60 PERCENT SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME -- BECAUSE CITIZENSHIP NOT ONLY BENEFITS IMMIGRANTS, BUT IT ALSO BENEFITS THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY LIVE.

IN FACT, RESEARCH SHOWS THAT PERMANENT RESIDENTS WHO BECOME U.S. CITIZENS RECEIVE AN AVERAGE 11 PERCENT BOOST IN PERSONAL INCOME AS A RESULT OF BETTER ACCESS TO JOBS, BENEFITS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

IN OTHER WORDS, BECOMING A U.S. CITIZEN MEANS BETTER OPPORTUNITIES AND OF COURSE, IT ALSO BESTOWS THE HONOR OF BECOMING A CITIZEN OF THE GREATEST COUNTRY ON EARTH -- THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

TO MARK THE BEGINNING OF THIS GROUNDBREAKING INITIATIVE, A CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE LATER THIS MORNING, AND 30 RESIDENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY WILL BE SWORN IN AS CITIZENS!

AS PART OF THE “CITIES FOR CITIZENSHIP” INITIATIVE, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS LAUNCHED A CITIZENSHIP WEBSITE, WHICH YOU CAN VISIT AT WWW.MIAMIDADE.GOV/CITIZENSHIP. THIS WEBSITE CONTAINS LINKS TO CITIZENSHIP RESOURCES AND A FACT SHEET ABOUT CITIZENSHIP ELIGIBILITY.

AROUND THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER, WE WILL ALSO INTEGRATE RESOURCES INTO OUR 3-1-1 CALL CENTER SO OUR RESIDENTS CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND CITIZENSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. THROUGH 3-1-1, COUNTY

OPERATORS WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO TRACK CALLS AND INQUIRIES FROM RESIDENTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING U.S. CITIZENS.

IN SHORT, WE ARE NOT ONLY ENTERING INTO A PARTNERSHIP TODAY, BUT WE ARE ALSO DEVELOPING A PATHWAY TO FACILITATE THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS FOR OUR COMMUNITY!

IT TRULY IS A GREAT DAY IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY.

AS THE FIRST PARTNERING COUNTY IN THE “CITIES FOR CITIZENSHIP INITIATIVE, MIAMI-DADE LOOKS FORWARD TO DOING MORE TO WELCOME IMMIGRANTS, TO HELP CLEAR THEIR PATH TO CITIZENSHIP, AND TO OPEN THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY TO MORE LEGAL RESIDENTS.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!