

United States Senate

June 8, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

On April 29, 2015, during the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing on the Homeland Security Department's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2016, I asked you about the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) study materials for the civics questions on the naturalization test. Currently, Question 51 reads:

What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?

- *freedom of expression*
- *freedom of speech*
- *freedom of assembly*
- *freedom to petition the government*
- *freedom of worship*
- *the right to bear arms*

It is my understanding that the answer choice "freedom of worship" has been used since 2008, when USCIS was advised that the word "worship" was more inclusive than the word "religion."

Today, June 8th, is the anniversary of the day on which James Madison introduced his amendments to the Constitution. Not only is "freedom of worship" inconsistent with the text of the Amendment proposed 226 years ago today, saying that "freedom of worship" is more inclusive than "freedom of religion" flies in the face of a pillar upon which our entire nation was founded. Our forefathers came to America to have freedom of religion, not simply freedom of worship. So valued, they made the free exercise of religion our first freedom.

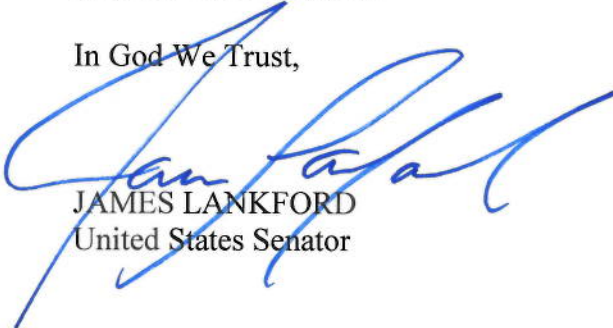
We are doing a great disservice to those seeking citizenship in this great country if we distort our history and fail to teach new citizens about the founding and constitutional principles of this nation. How can your Department request that Congress create a new United States Citizenship Foundation when your own naturalization materials do not even accurately reflect the constitutional rights of American citizens?

Our Constitution is clear – Americans have the freedom of religion. The naturalization test and its corresponding materials must be equally as clear. As such, I ask that you immediately change all documents that are part of the naturalization test, including the study materials, to correctly show that Americans have the right to the free exercise of religion.

The freedom of religion is much more than just the freedom of worship. Worship confines you to a location. Freedom of religion is the right to exercise your religious beliefs – it is the ability for Americans to live out their faith or to choose to have no faith at all.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and plan of action on this matter.

In God We Trust,



JAMES LANKFORD
United States Senator