

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100



September 8, 2008

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Re: Questions concerning immigration or naturalization

Dear Brothers:

We have received a number of inquiries from the field as a result of a change in the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) policy toward publishers who are seeking to be naturalized as United States citizens. This letter replaces the letter dated November 6, 1995, and its enclosure, both of which should be removed from the congregation's permanent file of policy letters and be destroyed.

The USCIS Web site (www.uscis.gov) provides the language of the oath of naturalization. The current oath of allegiance for naturalized citizens states:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.

The law is clear that applicants who refuse to take the oath of naturalization will be refused the privilege of naturalization. However, the USCIS Web site also explains:

In some cases, USCIS allows the oath to be taken without the clauses: "that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by law."

In support of his personal decision not to bear arms, each Witness must make his own declaration to the USCIS concerning his personal convictions on these issues. (1 Peter 3:15) In addition to the publisher's expressions of his personal beliefs, the USCIS regularly asks for:

A church letter. It must be on an official church stationery, state you are currently a member in good standing, and it must state the church's official position on the bearing of arms. (Emphasis theirs.) This letter must be signed by the minister or deacon.

So that you can assist publishers seeking citizenship, enclosed is a sample letter for your use in providing the statement required by the USCIS. Since the letter specifically states that the publisher is "in good standing," each body of elders must carefully determine whether or not this letter may be supplied.

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We trust the above information clarifies this matter. Please accept a warm expression of our Christian love and appreciation for the work you are accomplishing in behalf of our brothers.

Your brothers,
*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

Enclosure

cc: Traveling overseers

PS to secretary:

This letter and the enclosed sample letter should be retained in the congregation's permanent file of policy letters.

ANYTOWN CONGREGATION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

111 Main Street, Anytown, XX 12345-6789 Tel: (123) 456-7891

[Month, day, year]

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: [Name of publisher]

This letter is to inform you that [name of publisher] is a member of the [name of congregation] of Jehovah's Witnesses and has been associated with this congregation since [date]. According to our records, [name of publisher] was baptized on [date]. As of the date of this letter, [name of publisher] is in good standing.

The beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses concerning the bearing of arms are a matter of public and historical record and are well-known. Our beliefs are fully discussed in *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1996, pages 15-20. We are enclosing a copy of that article for your information and reference.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Very truly yours,

(Coordinator of the body of elders)

Enclosure

***THIS IS A SAMPLE ONLY AND SHOULD BE RETYPED IN ENGLISH
USING YOUR CONGREGATION LETTERHEAD***