

I recently introduced the Strengthen and Unite Communities with Civics Education and English Development (SUCCEED) Act– which helps new Americans integrate into the social and economic fabric of this country, through English language education and civics instruction.

According to the latest Census figures, nearly 20% of our population, close to 55 million people, speaks a language other than English at home. Altogether, 8.6% of this population speaks English 'less than very well.' While the English language learner population is often characterized as solely immigrant, the reality is that the native-born English language learner population nearly doubled between 2000 and 2005 and is increasing at a higher rate than the immigrant population. Better preparing this workforce will unite and strengthen our country.

Specifically, this legislation ensures that our nation's children and schools have adequate funding and resources for vital literacy programs for English language learners. SUCCEED re-establishes the Office of Citizenship in USCIS as the Office of Citizenship and Immigrant Integration, which would coordinate federal policies on integration and serve as a liaison to state and local entities. It also contextualizes English literacy instruction in lessons on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization proceedings, civic participation and U.S. history and government. In addition, SUCCEED provides vital technical assistance and support to state and local communities, and makes grants available to states to establish New American Councils that bring together business, faith, civic, philanthropic, non-profit and education stakeholders to create and implement immigrant integration programs