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# CIS NEWS RELEASE

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## **AGUILAR TO LEAD OFFICE OF CITIZENSHIP**

*Will promote citizenship responsibilities to immigrants*

Washington, D.C. – Eduardo Aguirre, Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), announced today that Alfonso Aguilar has been appointed Chief of the Office of Citizenship. In this new position, Mr. Aguilar will lead the CIS agenda to promote instruction and training on citizenship responsibilities to both immigrants and U.S. citizens.

Each year, the United States welcomes more than six hundred thousand new Americans through naturalization. “It is our duty to ensure that the process of becoming an American is meaningful to the candidate and beneficial for the country. One’s choice to join the American family includes a commitment to allegiance, patriotism and active participation in government and community,” said Director Aguirre. “We are a nation of diverse backgrounds and cultures. Alfonso will play an important role in strengthening our common bond of citizenship, while preparing applicants for the responsibilities that accompany the privilege of citizenship.”

Mr. Aguilar brings a wealth of experience in both immigrant and international affairs to his new position. A graduate of the University of Puerto Rico School of Law and the University of Notre Dame, Aguilar most recently worked as the Press Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Before that, Aguilar held similar positions with the U.S. Department of Energy and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

"I am truly honored to be sworn in as the first Director of the new Office of Citizenship. As a son of immigrants, I feel privileged that I have been given the awesome task of helping educate our new citizens about the great benefits and important responsibilities that come with U.S. citizenship," Aguilar said. "Also, as a U.S. Citizen from the beautiful Island of Puerto Rico, I accept this new challenge with great pride, remembering the great sacrifices Puerto Rican Americans, particularly those in our Armed Forces, have made over the past hundred years to protect and defend the values and rights that our citizenship guarantees."

The new Office of Citizenship will be introduced during a naturalization ceremony at a Citizenship Day celebration on September 17. The ceremony, open to media, begins at 1 p.m. in the O’Byrne Gallery of the Daughters of the American Revolution Continental Memorial Hall, in Washington, D.C. Director Aguirre and Mr. Aguilar will be available for media following the ceremony.

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On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. U.S. CIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.