



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 13, 2018

Switzerland's New Immigration Statute Sets High Hurdle for Citizenship

A new law in Switzerland seeks to stanch the  flow of immigrants into the small Alpine confederation renown for its historic adherence to principles of liberty and federalism.

Regulations promulgated by the law, which became effective this month, prevent immigrants who have received welfare in the past three years from being granted the vaunted status of "citizen" until they have paid the money back to the government.

An Austrian article written in German and translated into English by this author sets out the significant impediments to immigrants who seek asylum for the sake of banking Swiss francs.

Other provisions prevent temporary asylum seekers from applying for citizenship unless they have been granted a "settlement permit" (roughly the equivalent of Permanent Resident in the U.S.) after five or ten years.

Additionally, presence in Switzerland alone will not qualify an immigrant for consideration of citizenship status, either. The Swiss government now mandates a modicum of integration into Swiss culture before an immigrant can become a citizen.

And, in keeping with its confederate constitution, while a certain level of language proficiency will satisfy the general government, the threshold is higher in several cantons (states) where the flow of immigrants has been higher.

What has prompted Switzerland to take such a hard line against the flood of foreigners washing into their confederacy?

In October, Breitbart reported:

Swiss national councillor Simonetta Sommaruga has revealed that the problem of asylum seekers arriving into the country with no papers is so extensive the government does not know the true identities of nine out of 10 migrants.

According to Sommaruga, between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2016, Switzerland saw a total of 151,300 asylum seekers register in the country under false identities. The figures came after Swiss People's Party politician Barbara Steinemann made the government concede that as many as 96 percent of underage asylum seekers had no form of identification, *Basler Zeitung* reports.

Despite this terrifying statistic, the socialist mayor of Zurich, Corine Mauch, sent a letter to 40,000 foreign nationals in the city warning them of the tightening restrictions on the horizon.

The description of the genuine danger represented by immigrants entering a country using fake names, and the legislative attempt by Switzerland to manage the country's immigrant population and protect the value of citizenship reminds one of a statement made by James Madison about the benefits brought by immigrants and their acceptance as citizens, that is to say, their naturalization.

In a 1790 House of Representatives debate on naturalization, Madison declared:



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When we are considering the advantages that may result from an easy mode of naturalization, we ought also to consider the cautions necessary to guard against abuses; it is no doubt very desirable, that we should hold out as many inducements as possible, for the worthy part of mankind to come and settle amongst us, and throw their fortunes into a common lot with ours.

But, why is this desirable? Not merely to swell the catalogue of people. No, sir, 'tis to encrease the wealth and strength of the community, and those who acquire the rights of citizenship, without adding to the strength or wealth of the community, are not the people we are in want of. And what is proposed by the amendment is, that they shall take nothing more than an oath of fidelity, and an intention that they mean to reside in the United States: Under such terms, it was well observed by my colleague, aliens might acquire the right of citizenship, and return to the country from which they came, and evade the laws intended to encourage the commerce and industry of the real citizens and inhabitants of America, enjoying, at the same time, all the advantages of citizens and aliens.

I should be exceedingly sorry, sir, that our rule of naturalization excluded a single person of good fame, that really meant to incorporate himself into our society; on the other hand, I do not wish that any man should acquire the privilege, but who, in fact, is a real addition to the wealth or strength of the United States.

While there is much to learn from Mr. Madison's speech, one thing for sure is that all Americans benefit from the boon that is immigrants seeking to add "to the strength and wealth of the community" and that the "swell of the catalogue of people" is of no intrinsic increase to the strength of the union of states.

It appears Switzerland, for one, is following the advice given over 227 years ago by the Father of the American Constitution, and is preserving its constitutional confederacy at the same time.

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