



A More Perfect Union: A National Citizenship Plan

WRITTEN BY **JEFF CHENOWETH** AND **LAURA BURDICK**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In Memoriam to
Margaret A. “Peggy” Dean
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Margaret A. “Peggy” Dean was an irreplaceable source of knowledge, support, and friendship for adult education professionals and immigrants alike. Ms. Dean was known in Illinois and throughout the country as a leader in the field of citizenship education and policy. She dedicated herself to such programs by helping set up citizenship training courses for community-based organizations and community colleges throughout Illinois, hosting educator interest group meetings and developing a website of teaching materials. She worked closely with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) District Office in Chicago and facilitated a long-term, productive working relationship between citizenship educators and USCIS. Ms. Dean was emerging as a national spokesperson among immigrant advocates concerning the citizenship test redesign process and had recently presented before the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC on the proposed redesign.

Ms. Dean was an English as a Second Language/Naturalization Instruction Working Group member and advisor to Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. for this report prior to her death. As part of the project, she conducted interviews with citizenship instructors throughout the country.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Dean earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and a master’s degree in Spanish literature. She was fluent in Spanish and while working on her Ph.D. in Spanish literature, she taught Spanish language at Northern Illinois University. In 1977 in Elgin, Illinois, she began teaching English as a second language (ESL), and later developed a course that taught immigrants professional housekeeping skills. During the mid-1980s, she worked as an educational consultant for ESL and bilingual programs in the Elgin, Illinois school district. During this time, she created a Spanish literacy textbook and course that would ultimately aid immigrants’ ability to learn English.

Ms. Dean contracted poliomyelitis at age four. At age 59, Ms. Dean passed away from chronic restrictive lung disease, on Tuesday, July 19, 2005.

Ms. Dean is remembered as much for her extraordinarily positive, enthusiastic outlook on life as for her tremendous contribution to the field of citizenship education and policy. She will be dearly missed and remembered by her many friends in the adult education community. It is with respect that this report is dedicated to her memory.

About Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) advocates for transparent, fair and generous immigration policies. It represents one expression of the Catholic Church's commitment to the full membership of migrants in their chosen society. CLINIC and its member agencies serve the most vulnerable migrants, such as refugees, asylum seekers, detainees, families in need of reunification, laborers abused in the workplace, victims of domestic violence, and survivors of human trafficking.

In 1988, the United States Catholic Conference established CLINIC as a legally distinct nonprofit organization to support a rapidly growing network of community-based immigration programs. CLINIC's network originally comprised 17 programs. It has since increased to 161 programs in 255 office locations in 48 states. The network employs roughly 1,200 attorneys and accredited representatives who assist more than 400,000 immigrants each year. CLINIC and its member agencies serve low-income immigrants regardless of race, religion, gender, ethnic group, or other distinguishing characteristics.

CLINIC has great expertise in providing citizenship services, managing collaborative national and regional programs, providing training and technical assistance to local service providers, advocating for a fair and responsive immigration system, and promoting immigrant civic participation.

About the Authors

JEFF CHENOWETH began working for CLINIC in 1997 and is CLINIC's Director of National Programs. He has worked continuously in the field of non-profit immigration and refugee assistance since 1986. In that time, he has worked at the local, national, and international level. He holds a master's degree in social work from The Ohio State University.

LAURA BURDICK began working for CLINIC in 1997 and is a Senior Immigration Specialist. She has worked for local and national non-profit organizations serving immigrants and refugees since 1996. She holds a master's degree in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Mr. Chenoweth and Ms. Burdick have co-authored, edited, and contributed to several other CLINIC publications, including *Citizenship for Us: A Handbook on Naturalization and Citizenship* (2006); *Immigrant-Led Organizers in Their Own Voices: Local Realities and Shared Visions* (2006); *Citizenship for Refugee Elders: Issues and Options in Test Preparation* (2000); *Citizenship at Risk: New Obstacles to Naturalization* (2000); and co-authored a journal article, *The Path to Integration: Meeting the Special Needs of Refugee Elders in Resettlement* (2001).

Methodology Used to Produce *A More Perfect Union*

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) was awarded a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to describe a program that could naturalize the millions of Lawful Permanent Residents eligible for citizenship, focusing on those with the greatest challenges. In October 2004, the report's authors drafted a national citizenship plan outline to guide their research and report structure. In December 2004, CLINIC invited 11 experts on immigration, naturalization, citizenship, immigrant integration, and English language acquisition and naturalization instruction to form a one-time focus group. The focus group gave the authors input on the outline and recommended other experts to form an advisory group for the research period. In addition, the focus group offered names of persons to be interviewed.

In January 2006, CLINIC formed an advisory group of 22 persons. (See "Interviewees" noting advisory group members and their affiliation.) Interviews began in January 2005 with all focus and advisory group members. Each interviewee was asked to recommend names of others to be interviewed, thereby eliciting input from persons with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Interviews were semi-structured, loosely following a list of questions provided to the interviewee in advance. Interviews averaged 90 minutes in length. Interview content was captured using a qualitative database to store and later code responses. Codes were applied to common responses and collected in reports for easier content analysis.

In early 2005, CLINIC invited six experts in English language acquisition and naturalization instruction to form an English as a Second Language/Naturalization Instruction Working Group. (See "Interviewees" noting Working Group members and their affiliation.) The Working Group was assigned to interview other experts in the same fields, advise CLINIC on related policy and practice issues, and co-author a chapter of the report offering recommendations to expand and improve citizenship instruction.

By June 2006, the authors, including the ESL/Naturalization Instruction Working Group members, interviewed 108 experts. Although not attributed by name or through quotations, many facts and recommendations were provided by interviewees.

On June 7, 2006, CLINIC convened the advisory group to provide input on the most important recommendations for a national citizenship program. (See Recommendations for a National Citizenship Program at the conclusion of the Executive Summary.) While broadly supported by the advisory group and interviewees, recommendations in the Executive Summary and throughout the report are the opinions of the authors and CLINIC alone.

Interviewees for *A More Perfect Union*

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