



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

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For Immediate Release
Friday, July 1, 2005

Letter-to-the-Editor

Re: "Troops put lives on line to be called Americans", USA Today 6-30-05

(232 words)

USA Today
Letters-to-the Editor
7950 Jones Branch Drive
McLean, VA 22108

July 1, 2005

Dear Editor,

I was moved by the stories of foreign-born U.S. soldiers (*"Troops put lives on line to be called Americans"*, 6-30-05), particularly your account of the life and death of Army Spc. Uday Singh, a 21-year old Indian-born Illinois man whose eulogy I had the honor of delivering last year.

The first U.S. soldier of Indian descent to die in Iraq, Uday was serving his second tour of duty when he was killed. He earned the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and – posthumously – U.S. citizenship. His family told me how much he enjoyed his American lifestyle while revering his Sikh heritage.

I also attended the posthumous citizenship ceremony for Lance Cpl. Jakub Kowalik, a Polish-born U.S. Marine. I told his grieving mom that Jakub served the American people just as did another young officer from Poland: Casimir Pulaski, who broke the British siege at Charleston and gave his life in our Revolutionary War.

Uday Singh, Jakub Kowalik, Casimir Pulaski and many other foreign-born U.S. military personnel gave that "last full measure of devotion" so eloquently stated by President Abraham Lincoln on the Gettysburg battlefield. They sacrificed as much as any citizen could be asked to sacrifice. Let's not make the 30,000 U.S. soldiers who were born in the Philippines, Mexico or other lands wait until their deaths for citizenship. Let's do the right thing and put their citizenship on a fast track.

Sincerely,

Pat Quinn
Illinois Lieutenant Governor