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Pick a Country

The absurdity of the exclusive citizenship bill to Canadian / U.S dual citizens and nationalism entirely.

In the home of the free, dual citizens are nudged to pack their bags with the new congress bill.

“If you want to be an American, it’s all or nothing. It’s time to end dual citizenship for good,” says U.S Senator Bernie Moreno in a 2025 [press release](#). At 18 he became a sole U.S citizen the moment Moreno could, the same press release goes on to say.

Tensions between Canada and the United States have been more prevalent since the pandemic and continue to heighten. Import tariffs, political leadership and now the possibility of America banning dual citizens has impacted Canadians in a way that won’t make the country become *the 51st state*.

Here’s what any Canadian and dual citizen needs to know about the exclusive citizenship bill, with three thoughts on the proposed bill and national identity from Canadian / American dual citizens with lived experiences residing on Vancouver Island. This bill is more than a measly piece of paper and ink; it’s an impact on how individuals’ lives are shaped such as mine.

Vancouver Island is a stunning rainforest of close-knit communities from my experience. I wasn’t born here but have forged various communities within the pockets of Sooke and Nanaimo, B.C. The charming slick boardwalks and the sky-high evergreen trees available all year from sights to smells have been an incredible place to grow up. Finishing my university career, however, makes me consider the United States and moving more frequently.

The world is vast beyond this floating rock of Vancouver Island, and I intend to live almost everywhere possible. The exclusive citizenship bill will impact real people like me, and as a dual citizen the notion of closing those opportunities is offensive in its own right.

Should it have been proposed in the first place?

The Exclusive Citizenship Bill introduced December first, 2025 by Senator Monero, the bill may force dual citizens of the United States to either relinquish their foreign country citizenship or their U.S citizenship. They would have to complete this within 180 days of the enactment (if passed). Failure to comply will result in an assumed relinquishment of U.S citizenship.

Congress made the following findings on the proposed bill;

“(1) To preserve the integrity of national citizenship, allegiance to the United States must be undivided.

(2) Existing law allows certain United States citizens to maintain foreign citizenship, which may create conflicts of interest and divided loyalties.

(3) It is in the national interest of the United States to ensure that United States citizenship is held exclusively,” as written in the [Congress Bill 2025](#).

Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait currently do not allow dual citizenship, two of the few countries worldwide that have banned dual citizenship on the [world population review map](#). There is not an exact count on the number of countries as there are some countries only partially, or not recognized conclusively internationally.

Exclusive citizenship is not a common regulation globally. Currently the proposed bill has a - [3% chance](#) of being enacted even with [30 percent](#) of American voters looking to limit incoming immigration in the 2025 polls.

For Canadian / American dual citizens this bill south of the border can limit opportunities for investments, living and working conditions if the bill is passed by congress. No longer will options for employment in the North be as accessible in America for dual citizens residing in Canada, like Sofia Baca, a fourth year Honours Psychology student studying at The University of British Columbia in Kamloops, BC Canada.

Further than the migration and monetary issues, this bill leads to a bigger question about national identity amongst citizens. Former United States President Barack Obama writes;

“Part of America's genius has always been its ability to absorb newcomers, to forge a national identity out of the disparate lot that arrived on our shores,” in his 2007 book *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*.

The ability to accept newcomers may greatly impact American culture, and thoughts on national loyalty amongst dual citizens. With the proposed bill's aim to slim down what Americans can be, there is the question; *who suggests this?*

Bernie Moreno, an Ohio Senator and immigrant of the United States, “fights for the American dream because he’s *lived it.*” After his career as a car dealership owner, investor, cofounder of ChampTitles and Chair of The Board, Moreno has moved onto “... his calling: protecting the American dream for another generation,” on Bernie Moreno’s [website](#).

Coming from Bogota, Columbia he became an American citizen as soon as he turned 18 years old. Pledging sole allegiance to America by denouncing his Columbian citizenship.

If implemented, Moreno’s exclusive citizenship bill will close doors for American citizens to have the same choices of allegiance he’s had as a Columbian in the United States.

Moreno’s stance on The Exclusive Citizenship Bill is greatly impacted by his own experiences of choosing to pledge sole allegiance to the United States. His parents’ citizenship has mixed reports if they have kept their Colombian status or have fully transplanted to the United States.

The branding of Moreno’s campaign is that he has come from humble beginnings and fought for the American dream. While that may have been true at times [The Times](#) found that his family is from a wealthy, politically connected status in Bogota. The choice of citizenship is something Moreno is actively fighting against, despite his family having the resources and rights to move to the United States.

While the family’s wealthy background could be considered not important to his campaign, this bill is coming from a privileged politician's perspective that needs to be accounted for along with Moreno’s humble beginnings narrative. Exclusive Citizenship would influence all families globally of all backgrounds.

National Identity is an individual feeling of belonging to a country or state, that connects people psychologically to a shared sense of nationalistic community within a given place, as a [2025 article from Legal Clarity](#) summarizes.

This sense of community can bring together individuals for patriotic events like the fourth of July festivals, or the first of July celebrations on the government lawns. It can also divide people, as seen with the racist history of cold war ideals in the United States, or the entrapment and dominance over Indigenous tribes in Canada, all in the name of building a country. Without newcomers, the greatest fear is the possibility of repeating history through national identity ideals.

Imagine a country where the native languages within South America are not recognized as valid. This was the case with the 2026 American Superbowl where artist ‘Bad Bunny’ performed an incredible halftime show in Spanish, with American backlash on the country's recognized national language supposedly *not* including Spanish.

United States football fans were torn between supporting the Spanish artist or tuning into Turning Point USA's *alternate* halftime show with country headliners such as 'Kid Rock'. The global audience favored Bad Bunny's performance with an average viewership of 128.2 million viewers, compared to the approximate average of TPUSA's alternate show raking in an estimated 19 million views, reports [Newsweek](#).

The headliner act included on the NFL Stadium signs "The only thing more powerful than hate is love" displayed above the performers on the green field, in glowing bold letters for the audience to view on jumbotrons overhead cheering and booing fans. Bunny also stopped his performance to name every country in North and South America in his show, not only marking 2026 being the first Spanish halftime show but furthermore the first NFL halftime show for all Americans by Latin American artists.

All facets of life from entertainment to the products individuals purchase at the grocery store are all implicitly or explicitly political sentiments.

For Baca this idea of loyalty has impacted on her thoughts on which country she'd choose if made to by the proposed bill.

"I would almost feel obligated to choose the States because I feel like I'd be losing my culture and family," says Baca about her relationship with New Mexico and Canada.

Originally born in Albuquerque, New Mexico Baca has moved between Canada and the United States several times from a young age. With her birth certificate from New Mexico, her family decided to apply for dual citizenship with Canada when she was 12 years old.

"With Canada, I know I live here, have citizenship here, but I feel like I'm more attached by culture to New Mexico. It's just very distinct to me," says Baca.

Baca recalls her grandma teaching her how to make tamales and tortillas traditionally. The ingredients like pinto beans, green and red chilis that she can't find the same anywhere else in Canada. Her parents, family and Baca are all from the sunny state of New Mexico.

Before discussing the exclusive citizenship bill, Baca has never felt a need to choose where to live. She regularly visits her grandparents in Washington, D.C and has travelled back to New Mexico once throughout her time living in Canada.

"I've never had an issue crossing the border or coming back because of both passports," says Baca. As a young adult, Baca has also considered moving to the United States with her dual citizenship in the future.

“My parents very much framed it as more of a thing where I have an open opportunity instead of being in one place or the other. I could live in the States for a little bit, then I could come up to Canada. It was seen more of a way to expand my horizons, rather than choose sides,” says Baca on her dual citizenship.

Both Baca and myself currently have dual citizenship with the United States. We shared a connection with Colorado where I was born, and she lived for a brief time as a six-year-old.

My memories of Colorado include air balloons firing up on the community field beside a teenage boyband with the Greeley girls swooning to be closest to the small stage. Meanwhile all the parents are on the other side of the small field, frying up charcoaled barbecued American beef burgers and oily, delectable hot dogs that moisten the fingers around the two grills.

The beach access, right off the lawn, was my favourite part. The white sand connecting to the green soccer field, the warm water just kissing my toes. There weren't any sticks or twigs I can recall in the perfect sand. The trees in Greeley Colorado were all intentionally transplanted between the tightly squeezed houses.

The fourth of July festivals were the greatest, anywhere you went there was free candy flying from the homemade, papier mache floats, into our little hands. There are many happy memories stirring in the back of my mind whenever I read about America, despite the current state of the country.

My family moved from Greeley, Colorado to Vancouver Island just before my seventh birthday. Those field parties were open to everyone, and anyone was allowed to wear what they pleased.

The teen boy band on stage, with their off-tuned guitars would be shirtless with all kinds of piercings from their noses to nipples. Girls who would huddle by the stage often wore the fifty-star spangled flags on the bottoms of their jeans, or in small triangle bikinis.

With everything that has happened with the birth control laws, and ICE assaults, it's a much different place than I remember. For Canadian dual citizens who have visited America more recently, there remains some good and bad parts depending on the states they visit.

“I think it's fifty-fifty, you can go down with no issue, but we have seen in news reports people getting arrested and all that,” says Luther Noah on how welcoming the United States are currently.

Noah is a Vancouver Film School Graduate who has moved onto general duty work in New Brunswick since his 2024 diploma, coinciding with the same year he last visited the star-spangled states.

Recalling his trip to Washington that year there was a message or email thread going around, after Trump's election to office about Black-Americans being rounded up, with more derogatory language. Washington at that time however was welcoming enough, giving him no troubles crossing the borders or remarks from locals. Noah contributes this to the "left-wing" attitude the state has. This experience and the current state of this United States continues to influence his plans for moving and travelling.

"I wouldn't say it's off the table. I do want to visit California or New York this December because of their vintage train exhibits," says Noah.

Noah and I went to the same high school on Vancouver Island. We didn't talk much but I always recognized him from his interests of vintage World War uniforms and paraphernalia.

From being adopted by Canadian parents at a young age and joining the Canadian military, if he had to choose a country it would be Canada. Noah didn't express a clear opinion to the bill but resonates with his Canadian national identity more so than his American one.

"I would say more as a Canadian. The only time I say that I'm American is when I'm trying to piss people off," says Noah. He recalls joking about being a *dumb American* in TikTok comments. This is a joke I've heard often when bringing up my American origin as well.

Admittedly, there is an interesting paradox I have found in my schooling between the United States and Canada. In the United States, kindergarten taught me that the trades between Indigenous peoples and Americans was a mutually agreed, favorable deal that made everyone happy. In Canada I learned that was anything but the truth from Truth and Reconciliation Day assemblies, acknowledging the thousands of Indigenous families torn apart by settlers that continue to impact them today.

Canada has provided the majority of my education from first grade to my last year of university. The one sentiment that I've always heard, even not said aloud was, *we aren't like the Americans*. This always made me feel like an outsider because that was half of me. There are good and bad things about every country. What was wrong with being from somewhere else?

Personally, my identity as a Canadian or American has always been somewhere in between. Half of my family moved to Vancouver Island with us, and half are spread amongst the 50 states

currently. While there are aspects of both countries I enjoy or critique, I've always thought people are people everywhere. Nationality may influence a person, but it's not the entirety of a person.

Currently the United States continues to support dual citizenship as a Country, with [63 countries](#) allowed to have citizenship with the United States and [25% of age Americans](#) estimated to have considered, or already maintain dual citizenship. While the exact number of United States dual citizens is unable to be conclusive, the trends are showing the current relevance of multiple national citizens in America today.

If I had to choose, I'm not sure what I would pick. Living on Vancouver Island has given me the glorious evergreen forests to walk at my leisure, the smell of ocean air to wake up my senses each morning and a tighter community of fellow journalists to mentor me in the early years of my career. The United States offers its own charm outside current politics with the expansive man made fields to cheer on local football games at, the warmer summers with the soft trickling sand for my pale skin to bathe in, and the various internationally recognized publications that I dream of writing for as a current university student.

For young people such as Baca the choice is easy but complex. Her education and psychology licensing is from British Columbia, Canada while her cultural home is in Albuquerque, New Mexico. There are ingredients and traditions from New Mexico that are unique to the region that her family continues to foster. Her cultural identity is greatly impacted by the geography of her nationality, leading to feelings of cultural abandonment if she weren't to choose the United States.

Noah on the other hand would choose Canada, the country that has always been home to him from a young age and serves for currently. Yet, continues to seek travel to the United States that offers sunny beaches and train exhibits that encourage his interests.

For any individual, giving up a nationality is not something that is a rash decision. There are many factors that swirl the mind, what opportunities will be missed, what opportunities will be gained?

Members from my family have considered denouncing their United States citizenship for the sake of simplifying taxes between two countries. Their considerations, however, don't emphasize the nationality aspect as much.

Our lineage has always lived hopping between both sides of the border. My grandpa coming from Quebec didn't speak much English before moving to the United States, learning the majority of his English from my all-American grandmother.

There are benefits and confines to denouncing a citizenship in favor of a sole citizenship. It should be a choice for everyone to make without government pressures. Especially in a world where many cultures are immersed within various pockets of the world, globalization has done wonders to share expressions of nationality abroad, what would the 20th century look like with mobilization? There are many aspects of today that separate people from one another from war to tariffs, there isn't a need for the creation of new laws to further the cracks of belonging for individuals and families.

If the Exclusive Citizenship Act is passed, options for dual citizens may become strained. Opportunities for mobility will be constricted to the confines of citizenship, making an un-optional choice to choose the place individuals call 'home'. 'Home' is something greatly varied and personal to everyone, not a term to be strangled by the sake of nationalism.

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