

Americans in Waiting: The Lost Story of Immigration and Citizenship in the United States

Hiroshi Motomura

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Hiroshi Motomura : Americans in Waiting: The Lost Story of Immigration and Citizenship in the United States before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Americans in Waiting: The Lost Story of Immigration and Citizenship in the United States:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Informative, Exceptional, and Provocative: Americans in Waiting

Challenges Many Myths about American Immigration Law By Eric H. Roth This informative history of "Americans in Waiting" uncovers the lost story of harsh, often racist, laws that placed legal burdens on people living inside the United States. It's both a fascinating, lucid history and passionate plea for immigrants and refugees to be warmly welcomed into full citizenship. The author, Hiroshi Motomura, articulates a vision of immigration system that embraces "Americans in Waiting". Although written a decade ago, I found several chapters quite timely. It's also clear that America's immigration story has always been far more complicated than many immigration supporters and contemporary critics seem to believe. Detailed, exceptional, and provocative, *Americans in Waiting* challenges many myths and misconceptions about American Immigration laws. Read it to learn more! 17 of 18 people found the following review helpful. *Americans in Waiting: Legal Immigrants on a Path to Naturalization* By Jennifer Americans in Waiting blends a thorough analysis of the turbulent history of U.S. citizenship and immigration with a normative legal theory of what ought to be done. Motomuro, a leading immigration law scholar, evades overly obfuscating legal jargon in lieu of style that can be enjoyed by any reader from all degrees of background knowledge. Motomuro breaks legal immigration down into three views: immigration as contract, immigration as affiliation, and immigrants in transition, or what he otherwise terms as "Americans in Waiting." The third category is what Motomuro is most concerned with, hence the title of the book. Americans in Waiting are legal immigrants who are on a path to citizenship, but who have not or cannot naturalize yet (i.e: either they have not met the legal naturalization waiting period of 3-5 years for Legal Permanent Residents, administrative backlog, etc). While Motomuro argues that rights should be extended to this status of persons, such as voting, access to public benefits, and family reunification rights, he still believes there is reason for Americans in Waiting to remain a separate category from full-citizens. One categorical difference he believes should remain in tact is deportability for criminal acts. By recapturing key court cases, Motomuro traces the development of alienage law as we know it today and he also provides good reason for why his articulation is desirable for America and its future as a people. I have been studying U.S. immigration and citizenship quite thoroughly for about a year now, but it was not until reading this book that so many key terms and distinctions between different statuses became so coherent. Motomuro sheds much clarity and insight onto a highly complex and vital social and political issue. Excellent all around! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended. By William P. Martin I had the privilege of hearing Hiroshi Motomura speak at Lewis Clark Law School and immediately purchased his books. Highly recommended.

Although America is unquestionably a nation of immigrants, its immigration policies have inspired more questions than consensus on who should be admitted and what the path to citizenship should be. In *Americans in Waiting*, Hiroshi Motomura looks to a forgotten part of our past to show how, for over 150 years, immigration was assumed to be a transition to citizenship, with immigrants essentially being treated as future citizens--Americans in waiting. Challenging current conceptions, the author deftly uncovers how this view, once so central to law and policy, has all but vanished. Motomura explains how America could create a more unified society by recovering this lost history and by giving immigrants more, but at the same time asking more of them. A timely, panoramic chronicle of immigration and citizenship in the United States, *Americans in Waiting* offers new ideas and a fresh perspective on current debates.

"An impressive overview of American immigration and citizenship law over the past 200 years."--Najia Aarim-Heriot, American Historical "Hiroshi Motomura's portrait of immigration history in the United States is as poignant as it is precise. *Americans in Waiting* emphasizes the need to treat lawful immigrants more inclusively, and welcome them as future citizens who will help revitalize the American Dream for future generations, as they have done throughout history."--U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy "Motomura provides an essential resource for those steeped in immigration law and history, as well as a revelatory read for anyone interested in how Americans can remain true to our historical willingness, as a nation of immigrants, to incorporate newcomers humanely and fairly."--Cristina Rodriguez, Michigan Law "A unique, original and insightful analysis of policies regarding immigrant rights, *Americans in Waiting* merits the attention of all serious students of immigrant incorporation."--Rodolfo O. de la Garza, author of *Making Americans, Remaking America: Immigration and Immigrant Policy* "Motomura elegantly weaves together the history and modern developments of immigration law and American conceptions of immigrants, making complex topics much more understandable. This is a timely book, and one that encourages us to think more deeply about the consequences of American citizenship policies."--Lucy Salyer, author of *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* "With comprehensive historical sweep and theoretical insight, *Americans in Waiting* masterfully charts the way to more inclusive policies that are true to the United States' identity as a nation of immigrants and that promote a robust and cohesive notion of citizenship."--T. Alexander Aleinikoff, author of *Semblances of Sovereignty: The Constitution, The State, and American Citizenship* "Legal scholars and practitioners will find the book's attention to detail particularly useful. The author examines a strikingly wide range of immigration case law, much of which is not typically included in the corpus of social scientific literature on immigration law. ...*Americans in Waiting* is a valuable addition to contemporary discussions of immigration and citizenship, especially at a time when the rush to pass comprehensive immigration

reform has all but crowded out reflections on the nature of American community."--The Law and Politics Book

"Motomura displays a great deal of legal erudition and writes with flair. Nevertheless, his analysis is accessible to those not specialized in immigration law or law in general. This important and original book is of broad interdisciplinary interest."--The International History From the Publisher

Advance Praise for *Americans in Waiting*

"Hiroshi Motomura's portrait of immigration history in the United States is as poignant as it is precise. *Americans in Waiting* emphasizes the need to treat lawful immigrants more inclusively, and welcome them as future citizens who will help revitalize the American Dream for future generations, as they have done throughout history." -- U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy

"Motomura recovers an important conception of immigration implicit in U.S. law and policy in earlier times: the idea of immigrants as future citizens. In Motomura's skillful hands, the concept takes on new life and provides important insights into current debates on citizenship. With comprehensive historical sweep and theoretical insight, *Americans in Waiting* masterfully charts the way to more inclusive policies that are true to the U.S.'s identity as a nation of immigrants and that promote a robust and cohesive notion of citizenship." -- T. Alexander Aleinikoff, author of *Semblances of Sovereignty: The Constitution, The State, and American Citizenship*

"*Americans in Waiting* is a rare achievement in its ability to engage both non-specialists and scholarly and professional audiences. Motomura elegantly weaves together the history and modern developments of immigration law and American conceptions of immigrants, making complex topics much more understandable. His provocative proposal--that the United States should treat lawful immigrants as future citizens, conferring upon them equal rights and benefits as they establish permanent residence--is certain to spark a healthy debate about the future of American immigration and citizenship. This is a timely book, and one that encourages us to think more deeply about the consequences of American citizenship policies." -- Lucy Salyer, author of *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law*

"A unique, original and insightful analysis of policies regarding immigrant rights. Based on a careful reading of an impressively wide range of legal decisions, few of which are part of the corpus of the most significant social scientific literature on immigration law, he develops a tripartite conceptualization that illustrates alternative theories of immigrant rights. *Americans in Waiting* merits the attention of all serious students of immigrant incorporation." -- Rodolfo O. de la Garza, author of *Making Americans, Remaking America: Immigration and Immigrant Policy*

About the Author

Hiroshi Motomura is Susan Westerberg Prager Professor of Law at UCLA and author of *Americans in Waiting*.