

August 12th, 2026

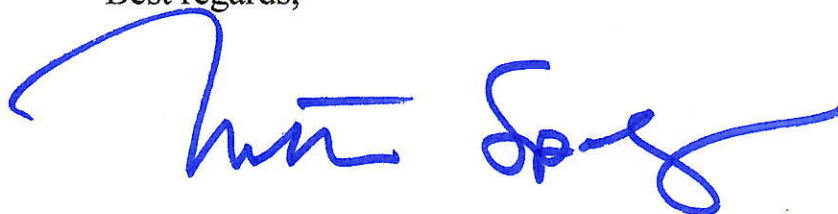
DR. MATTHEW SPALDING
*Vice President for Washington
Operations & Dean of the Van
Andel Graduate School
of Government*

Senator Charles Grassley
Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Grassley:

Please find attached my answers to Senator Welch's questions concerning my testimony at the Senate Committee on the Judiciary's hearing entitled "Protecting American Citizenship IV: America 250 and Reclaiming American Citizenship" on Wednesday, June 24, 2026. I apologize for the delay.

Best regards,



Matthew Spalding
Hillsdale College Washington, D.C. Campus
Dean, Steve & Amy Van Andel Graduate School of Government
Vice President for Washington Operations

Dr. Matthew Spalding

Answers to Questions from Senator Welch

**Hearing on “Protecting American Citizenship IV:
America 250 and Reclaiming American Citizenship”
Wednesday, June 24, 2026**

Having reviewed the materials referred to in your question, I note that the quote used in the government’s brief before the Supreme Court in *Trump v. Barbara* (2026) is “When such individuals were born in the United States, they were subject to its jurisdiction because, as even *Dred Scott* acknowledged, they ‘owe[d] allegiance to the Government, whether they were slave or free.’” The verb used in the sentence is “owe” and not “had,” the past participle of “have.”

With the Fourteenth Amendment, slaves and the children of slaves, being “born or naturalized in the United States” and being “subject to the jurisdiction thereof,” were completely subject to the political jurisdiction of the United States. Like children born of citizens, children of freed slaves met these criteria. Such individuals “owe allegiance to the Government, whether they were slave or free.”

Regarding children of individuals of Japanese descent held in internment camps during World War II, the vast majority were children of United States citizens and thus were completely subject to the political jurisdiction of the United States, owing allegiance to the United States. Of the rest, most if not all were permanent residents, and thus subject to the Fourteenth Amendment’s citizenship clause under *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898).

For different reasons, neither of these circumstances raise questions of citizenship or “owed” allegiance outside the two conditions defined by the Fourteenth Amendment and thus neither circumstance supports a legal claim of birthright citizenship. Whether or not those individuals may or may not have “had” allegiance to the United States, while of great interest, has no bearing on the legal question of citizenship.