

Rights and Responsibilities of U.S. Citizens



*The jury box in the Howard M. Metzenbaum U.S. Courthouse, Cleveland, Ohio.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-highsm-10671.*

There are two important responsibilities that are only for U.S. citizens: to vote in federal elections and to serve on a jury. A jury is a group of citizens in a courtroom that listens to a trial. The jury decides the outcome of a trial. If a citizen gets a court letter to serve on a jury, the person must go. Another responsibility of citizens is voting. The law does not require citizens to vote, but voting is a very important part of any democracy. By voting, citizens are participating in the democratic process. Citizens vote for leaders to represent them and their ideas, and the leaders support the citizens' interests.

There are two special rights only for U.S. citizens: voting in federal elections and running for federal office. Many naturalized citizens

have been elected as U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives. In order to run for the Senate, a candidate must have been a U.S. citizen for at least 9 years. To run for the House of Representatives, a candidate must have been a U.S. citizen for at least 7 years. To run for president of the United States, a candidate must be a natural born (not naturalized) citizen.



*U.S. Representative Dalip Singh Saund was born in India. He served in Congress from 1957 to 1962.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-102603.*

Answer these Civics Test questions.

1. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens? _____
2. Name one right only for United States citizens. _____