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Thousands Renounce US Citizenship as Expatriation Figures Near Record High

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A nearly unprecedented number of Americans have voluntarily renounced their citizenship or relinquished their U.S. residency status since the start of the year.

A total of 4,574 names appeared on the Federal Register's U.S. expatriation list over the first three quarters of the year, representing individuals whose loss of U.S. citizenship or long-term permanent resident status was reported to the Treasury Department. The latest quarterly update, issued on Thursday, shows that 1,331 names appeared on the register between July and September alone, although the number was down from 1,462 between January and March and 1,781 between April and June.

Despite this modest quarterly dip, it is clear when comparing these numbers to previous years that 2026 has seen an unusually high number of Americans renounce U.S. citizenship or give up their permanent residency.

Why So Many Americans Are Cutting Ties with the Country

According to a recent analysis by Greenback Expat Tax Service, the number of Americans losing citizenship or permanent resident status averaged below 500 between 2000 and 2008, with just 452 names on average reported each year during that period.

Renunciations started surging after Congress passed the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, or FATCA, in 2010. This federal law requires foreign financial institutions and certain other non-financial foreign entities to report on the foreign assets held by their U.S. account holders. Critics say the reporting requirements, combined with the United States' citizenship-based tax system, increased the compliance burden on many Americans living abroad.

The law came into force in 2014, with over 100 countries agreeing to implement it. Especially for so-called "accidental Americans," people who might have U.S. citizenship without ever having lived in the country or having any intention to do so at a certain point in the future, FATCA represented an incentive to cut ties with the country completely.

"No matter where you go, every euro, pound, peso you ever make is subject to U.S. tax, in life and in death. And when you're living in a low-tax jurisdiction like the United Arab Emirates, it's not fun to be taxed by the U.S.," Alexander Marino, who heads Moody's, the largest renunciation law practice in the world, previously told Newsweek.

"And when you're living in a high-tax jurisdiction, like the U.K., having two hands in your cookie jar is also never fun."

The Treasury's list does not tell us exactly when individuals renounced their U.S. citizenship, but only when the department was notified of their change in status. But the past 10 years of data show that the number of Americans doing so has grown significantly.

The register's U.S. expatriation list reached a record of 5,411 names in 2016, the same year Trump won his first presidential election, beating Hillary Clinton in the November election. This record was beaten in 2020, when the register listed a total of 6,707 names.

Based on the quarterly reports issued this year so far, 2026 seems on track to beat the 2016 figure—though potentially coming up behind the 2020 one.

However, the actual number of individuals renouncing U.S. citizenship might be higher. The Federal Register says it covers individuals losing U.S. citizenship under the relevant tax provisions and also applies to certain long-term residents who end their U.S. residency. Separately, the IRS classifies some people as "covered expatriates" if they meet a $2 million net-worth test, exceed an inflation-adjusted five-year average tax-liability threshold, or fail to certify five years of federal tax compliance. Many with a lower net worth may go unrecorded.

Does Trump Have Something To Do with Rising Renunciations?

Since Trump's return to the White House, the number of names on the Treasury's register has been rising. In the first quarter of 2025, 1,285 Americans formally expatriated or renounced their U.S. citizenship. The figure fell to 1,057 in the second quarter, rose to 1,593 in the third, and dropped to 954 in the fourth.

It is not a coincidence. While for many renouncing U.S. citizenship or permanent residency might just be about paying less tax, "for others, there's also a sense that

America's future is increasingly problematic," Peter Spiro, a professor who holds the Charles Weiner Chair in international law at Temple University, previously told Newsweek. "In the face of increasing political turbulence, sentimental attachment to the United States has been wearing thin," he added.

A former U.S. citizen living in Europe, who recently renounced their citizenship, previously told Newsweek that their "fundamental dislike of Trump and his policies and the direction in which that country is going" convinced them "to pull the trigger" on a situation they were mulling over for a while.

There is also another reason why many more might have decided to renounce their citizenship or permanent residency over the past few months. As of April 13, the fee applicants had to pay to renounce U.S. citizenship dropped back from $2,350, a level reached in 2015, to $450. There is a delay in the way the Treasury reports expatriations, so these numbers may only show up on the register next year.

According to Melissa Chavin, a U.S. immigration, visa and citizenship lawyer based in London, it seems like the Trump administration dropped the processing fee "to allow people who are not close to their U.S. citizenship, and do not want it, to be able to leave it behind," even as requests have increased.

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