

Is Mayor Pete a Natural Born Citizen?

DID JOSEPH BUTTIGIEG NATURALIZE BEFORE HIS SON'S BIRTH?

by [Joseph DeMaio](#), ©2020



The Swiss philosopher Emmerich de Vattel wrote “The Law of Nations,” which was heavily referenced by the Framers of the U.S. Constitution. Source: Wikipedia, [public domain](#)

(Feb. 9, 2020) — Well, faithful P&E readers, the “eligibility” issue surfaces again, this time with regard to one of the Democrat presidential candidates vying for the opportunity to be bludgeoned in the November general election by President Trump. That lucky fellow is Pete Buttigieg. Memo to all you other non-P&E readers who have accidentally stumbled onto this offering: you can go back to whatever else you were doing, as you will be unable to follow the rest of this post.

OK, here is the preface: in connection with the intrepid editor’s recent P&E post found [here](#), one of the regular commenters (CDR Kerchner, Ret.) has noted (2/5/20 at 8:07 PM) that he had searched the Wikipedia website entry for Pete Buttigieg’s father, Joseph Buttigieg.

The search disclosed that “if” the information elicited from Wikipedia on the naturalization of Pete Buttigieg’s father Joseph in 1979 is correct, then his son, Peter Buttigieg – born thereafter on Jan. 19, 1982 – is likely a natural born citizen eligible to the presidency under Art. 2, § 1, Cl. 5 of the Constitution.

This conclusion would be consistent with the premise that the Founders intended that only persons born within the geographic boundaries of the United States to two parents, a mother and a father, who were at the time of birth *already* U.S. citizens would be eligible to the presidency. Moreover, this result would also be consistent with the teachings of § 212 of Emmerich de Vattel's *The Law of Nations* upon which the Founders relied when drafting the Constitution and discussed [here](#).

There is little doubt that candidate Buttigieg's mother, Jennifer Anne Buttigieg (*née* Montgomery), was also, at minimum, a "native-born" U.S. citizen, so the "two citizen parents" requirement of § 212 would seem to be satisfied, provided that Joseph Buttigieg can be proved to have been naturalized before Jan. 19, 1982. Nor is there any doubt that Joseph Buttigieg was an educated, upstanding member of society. That acknowledgment, however, does not eliminate the question of whether he was naturalized as a U.S. citizen before Pete Buttigieg was born.

In his recent comment to the editor's post above, CDR Kerchner solicits further facts and comments on the point. Your faithful servant obliges, as follows.

First, as all regular P&E readers recognize, while Wikipedia can "generally" be looked to for uncontroversial, "generic" information, because it is an "open" sourced website anyone can post, edit, alter, include or omit information seen there for any particular subject. The "[Terms of Use](#)" page for the website confirms that persons are free to "[c]ontribute to and edit our various sites or projects.

Pursuant to this "open invitation," for example, the Wikipedia site for "[Barack Hussein Obama](#)" contains an extensive profile, accompanied by no less than (as of today) 535 footnotes purporting to support his bona fides. Yet in all of the text and footnotes, there is not a single word – or, for that matter, a single sentence – discussing the issue of whether he was (or is) a "natural born citizen" as required by the Constitution. That issue is segregated away from the main BHO website and addressed elsewhere.

The only tangential references in the main Wikipedia BHO site to the topic of constitutional eligibility are found in a "Public Image/News and public events" section at the end with links to other subsites identified as (1) [Citizenship conspiracy theories](#); (2) [litigation](#)"; and (3) [legislation](#)."

Interestingly enough, in the "Further Reading" section of the main BHO Wikipedia entry, one finds reference to an [article](#) published Nov. 1, 2006 in *The Washingtonian* magazine entitled "The Legend of Barack Obama" by one Garrett M. Graff.

One of the more illuminating passages from the article – written well before questions regarding his constitutional eligibility surfaced, thanks to (some would argue) Hillary ("BleachBit... what BleachBit?") Clinton – is this nugget: "According to advisers, colleagues, and friends, Obama just might be *willing to be the next president of the United States*. It would be the capstone of an amazing rise for a politician whose

charisma and personal story – *half-Kenyan*, half-Kansan, a Hawaii-born, Harvard-educated lawyer – has breathed life into the Democratic Party.” (Emphasis added).

“Willing to be the next president of the United States?” As in “he might deign to consider it?” And how about that “half-Kenyan, half Kansan” statement? Interesting..., no?

But I digress. The point is that none of the “open invitation” Wikipedia contributors to the BHO “story” has thus far seemed willing to address directly – as your faithful servant has attempted over the years here at The P&E – the question of what the Founders meant when they included in the Constitution the “natural born Citizen” requirement of Art. 2, § 1, Cl. 5. Unless and until the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the issue in a live “case or controversy,” all of the law review articles, lower court dismissals for lack of “standing” and pontifications by law professors and constitutional “scholars” are, to state the matter politely, inconclusive.

Second, returning to Mayor Pete and his father, a closer examination of the Wikipedia profile of [Joseph Buttigieg](#) reveals that the source for the statement that the senior Buttigieg “was naturalized in 1979” is a footnote. That footnote (*i.e.*, fn. 3) links to an obituary notice published in the *South Bend Tribune* and linked at [Legacy.com](#). That obituary notice, in turn, states that he “became a citizen in 1979.”

Memo to P&E readers: the rebuttable presumption is that, in fact, Joseph Buttigieg was naturalized as a U.S. citizen prior to Pete Buttigieg’s birth three years later. If documented, that should remove any dispute over whether Mayor Pete meets the “natural born Citizen” criterion of the Constitution under a “de Vattel § 212” analysis.

That said, however, the question remains: what is the source of the Legacy.com statement (and published in the *South Bend Tribune* linked to that site) that he “became a citizen in 1979?” Unless it can be proven through reliable, corroborated, empirical evidence that he was so naturalized in 1979 – or at minimum, naturalized before January 19, 1982 – Mayor Pete’s *bona fides* as a “natural born citizen” will remain in doubt. The Founders did not favor “doubt” in the criteria needed to satisfy the “natural born Citizen” requirement they inserted into the Constitution. Instead, they sought to remove *all* doubt.

While there may be many reasons why Pete Buttigieg may not become the nominee of the Democrat Party to go up against President Trump, doubts about his constitutional eligibility should not be one of them. Recall that one of the core pieces of information upon which supporters of Barack Hussein Obama Jr. initially based their claim that he was born in Honolulu, Hawaii was... wait for it... wait for it... a birth announcement said to have been prepared by his grandparents and published in a newspaper.

In matters as weighty as one’s eligibility to serve as president, documentation beyond hearsay statements given by relatives found in birth announcements or obituaries do not exactly measure up to the “Best Evidence Rule.” And please, no more postings to the

Internet of images purporting to “prove” constitutional eligibility... that trick is getting old.

Whether or not Mayor Pete determines to respond to these issues is a matter up to him and his advisors. But the nation has already endured two likely usurpers of the presidency. It should not have to endure any more.