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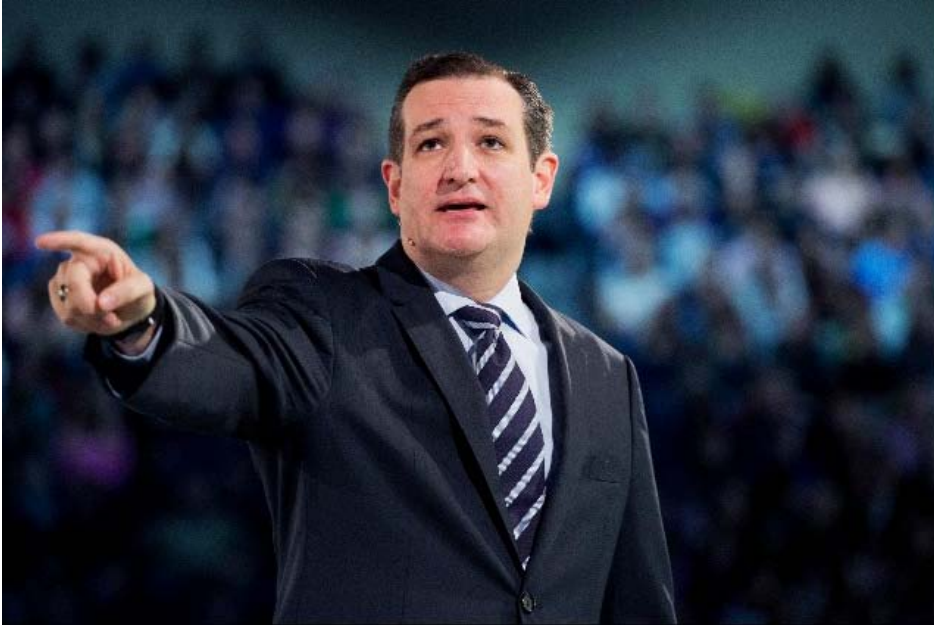
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Ted Cruz, Candidate/Canadian & London's Yank Mayor Showcase Exit Rules

Ted Cruz's [campaign launch announcement](#) at the world's largest Christian college was big. So is Texas, and so is the country where Sen. Cruz was born: Canada. His father was born in Cuba, his mother in Delaware. Some argue that he is unqualified to be President, but does he have a birther problem? The Constitution's Natural Born Citizenship Clause says "no person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President."

Experts have lined up on both sides of the debate, but most seem to conclude that Sen. Cruz is eligible to run and serve. Catholic University's Sarah Helene Duggin [wrote about a potential Cruz candidacy](#) in October 2013. Two authorities, Neal Katyal and Paul Clement, [said in a Harvard Law Review article](#) that "there is no question that Senator Cruz has been a citizen from birth and is thus a 'natural born Citizen' within the meaning of the Constitution."



Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, speaks during a convocation at Liberty University's Vines Center in Lynchburg, Va., where he announced his candidacy for President of the United States, March 23, 2015. (Photo By Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call)

Yet Donald [Trump isn't so sure, bringing a birther charge against Sen. Cruz](#). Interestingly, the constitutional convention did not make clear precisely what "natural born citizen" is supposed to mean. The Supreme Court has never ruled on the issue either. Even so, Sen. Cruz has some practical precedents, even if they are not of the court variety. Sen. John McCain, who ran in 2008, was born in the Panama Canal Zone. George Romney (Mitt's father), who ran in 1968, was born in Mexico.

Sen. Cruz has said, "I was born in Calgary. My mother was an American citizen by birth. Under federal law, that made me an American citizen by birth. The Constitution requires that you be a natural-born citizen." It is a funny position for a politician to have to talk about, since Sen. Cruz turns out to have been born a citizen of Canada. It was several years ago that the [Dallas Morning News](#) reported his dual citizenship, a real [tax 'story of the century'](#).

Fortunately for Sen. Cruz, Canadian status can be handed in easily, as he proved by [renouncing his newly discovered Canadian citizenship](#). Giving up one's U.S. status is usually more involved. Take London's Mayor Boris Johnson. Born in the U.S., he left for Britain at age 5. Still, the IRS wanted its pound of flesh from Mayor Johnson's global income...*forever*. For a time, the tousled blond mayor refused to pay. He had toyed with renouncing his American passport years ago, but [the BBC confirmed](#) he never gave it up, despite threats in [the Spectator](#).

His tax protests peaked in an [interview with NPR](#). Despite his threats that he would not pay the IRS, he did just that and *then* announced his intention to renounce. That was the only way to do it

safely and get the IRS off the hunt. For Mayor Johnson, completing his renunciation is a smart move. Mayor Johnson has stressed his non-tax patriotic reasons for renouncing, though he denies he's eyeing the Prime Minister chair. His commitment, he notes, is to Britain.

Giving up U.S. citizenship is not a decision to take lightly, and plainly it is not something Sen. Cruz would ever consider doing. Yet it is becoming more and more common for plenty of regular folks. America's controversial worldwide income tax is inflexible and unforgiving. It seems to invite greener pastures. One big category is Americans abroad who face a hostile tax regime and increasingly complex status of being Americans. Many foreign banks and other financial institutions will not deal with Americans or will do so only begrudgingly. Many Americans living overseas are feeling disenfranchised and express hostility over FATCA.

Accidental American citizens—like Senator Ted Cruz's Canadian status—are another category of Americans who often conclude that they want to renounce. Sen. Cruz apparently only discovered he was also Canadian in 2013. Accidental citizens may not need U.S. citizenship and may think all the tax and financial account reporting is too much.

But whatever motivates them, the [number of Americans renouncing citizenship has been surging](#). The list of leavers—a kind of public shaming—is published quarterly in the [Federal Register](#). Among the more notable expatriations in 2012 was Facebook co-founder [Eduardo Saverin](#). Wealthy socialite [Denise Rich](#), whose husband was pardoned by President Clinton, and music icon [Tina Turner](#) were also noteworthy.

To leave America, you generally must prove 5 years of U.S. tax compliance. Plus, if you have a net worth greater than \$2 million or have average annual net income tax for the 5 previous years of \$157,000 or more (that's tax, not income), you pay an [exit tax](#). There is an exemption of approximately \$680,000. [Giving Up A Green Card](#) can cost you too. Some people expatriate under the immigration rules and never file anything with the IRS, a practice that is generally unwise. But then, no one wants to get on the wrong side of the IRS.

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