



## IMMIGRANT POWER: NATURALIZED AMERICAN WINS BOSTON MARATHON

*Posted on April 22, 2014 by Cyrus Mehta*

Today is a day to celebrate. One year after the devastating bombings at the Boston Marathon, Meb Keflezighi won the Boston marathon. [Keflezighi is a naturalized American](#). "I'm blessed to be an American and God bless America and God bless Boston for this special day," Keflezighi said.

Read more here:

<http://www.star-telegram.com/2014/04/21/5753571/american-meb-keflezighi-wins-boston.html#storylink=cpy>

This victory resonates much stronger as it comes one year after the horrific bombs resulted in 3 deaths and over 260 injured. The surviving bombing suspect, Dzhokar Tsarnaev, is also a naturalized American. His brother, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, who got killed in the shootout last year, unsuccessfully tried to naturalize.

In the immediate aftermath of last year's bombings, Senator Grassley cynically [attempted to tie the Boston marathon attacks to immigration reform](#).

"We appreciate this opportunity to talk about immigration reform in light of all that has been happening in Massachusetts," said Senator Grassley.

Fortunately, the Senate immigration reform bill, S. 744, still got passed, but it included provisions that would make it more difficult for people to get registered provisional status depending on their country of origin as a result of additional security screening, and another provision would lead to the revocation of asylum or refugee status if the person visited his or her country of persecution without good cause.

Today, after Keflezighi's spectacular win, against all odds, no one can and should link immigrants to terrorism. Most immigrants are like Keflezighi, who aspire success for themselves and their families. This is the story of

immigration, which is also an Americans story, told over and over again.

Even after the 9/11 attacks, and despite the unfortunate profiling of immigrants from certain countries in the immediate aftermath, immigrants still won. Although immigration benefits, including obtaining a green card through a marriage with a US citizen, are now viewed through the prism of national security, the immigration system was never radically altered. There was no diminishing of the already meager quotas, and immigrants still came and continue to come to America to make it richer and more diverse.

In this context, Keflezighi's win is most powerful. An American, who was born in Eritrea, has won the Boston marathon after Lisa Larsen Weidenbach won in 1985 and Greg Meyer in 1983. While an immigrant has won for America today, millions of immigrants, through their achievements big and small, win for America all the time.

The urgency to reform our broken immigration system is felt more so today when we can be attracting many more Mebs who will not only excel in sports, but also in scientific achievements and creating innovative companies. The marathon began last year when the Senate deliberated on and passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill. When will the House joins the race to reach the finishing line and help us all win big time for America?