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‘I can’t believe this is happening’



Former Erie County Democratic Chairman Ian Murray retired to Maine about four years ago, but voluntarily departed for his native Canada on Nov. 12 after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security determined that he was not a U.S. citizen. Murray, 75, was born in Canada but had lived in the United States since he was 5. PROVIDED BY IAN MURRAY

Erie Democratic leader Ian Murray leaves U.S. after citizenship shock

Ed Palattella
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ian Murray, one of Erie’s most influential politicians and a former member of the Democratic National Committee, has left the United States.

But not by choice.

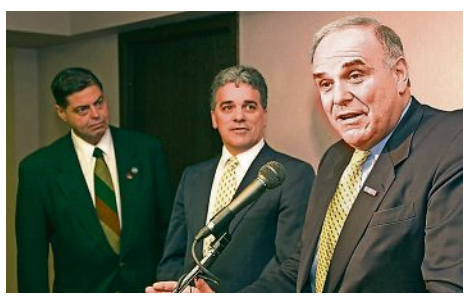
Murray, 75, departed for his native Canada on Nov. 12 after the U.S. government determined he has never been a citizen of the United States, where he had lived since he was 5, mostly in Erie.

“I can’t believe this is happening,” he said. “It’s almost like I am being erased.”

Murray, a lawyer, retired from Erie politics and the practice of law about five years ago. He moved to Maine, where he most recently lived with his wife in Blue Hill, just east of Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park.

He and his wife are now residents of

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Ian Murray, center, appears in 2002 with Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, a fellow Democrat and close political ally. City Councilman Jim Thompson is at left. ERIE TIMES-NEWS FILE

Murray said his passport application ultimately prompted a review of his mother’s residency history, which led to the determination that he did not acquire U.S. citizenship at birth.

Ian Murray’s immigration case and exit stun Erie political figures

Ed Palattella
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Prominent Erie politician Ian Murray said he was shocked when he learned he was not a U.S. citizen and had to leave the country.

Friends and colleagues in Erie expressed similar disbelief about what happened to Murray, who served a four-year term on Erie City Council, ending in 2005; led the Erie County Democratic Party from 1986 to 1998; and attended nine presidential conventions as a member of the Democratic National Committee from 1982 to 2020.

“It is very sad,” said Erie lawyer John Mizner, the former chairman of the Erie County Republican Party. “It is extremely disappointing that this has happened to someone who put so

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ERIE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

Parents seek answers and money back from school

Dana Massing
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Erie Preparatory Academy parents want answers, help and their money back.

Mothers and fathers of students who came to the Erie County school from New Zealand, Japan and other countries received an email from the institution’s founder earlier in November. Phillip Gernovich said the private, Christian-centered boarding and day school only had about two weeks before it would close around Nov. 23 due to insufficient funding to continue operations.

After not being able to reach Gernovich, who was also EPA’s head of school, and Cassondra Enterline, who had reportedly resigned as principal, parents from multiple countries began banding together and talking about legal action. One has even contacted an embassy for help and advice.

“My son and our entire family are distressed, frustrated, sadden(ed) and financially exhausted,” Lindsay Woledge said in an email to the Erie Times-News.

Woledge said she flew from New Zealand to Erie this month to retrieve her son, a basketball player who had been recruited to attend Erie Prep Academy. His retired grandmother

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