



SPLC
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Law Center



April 11, 2018

The Honorable Bill Nelson
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Senator Nelson,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced this addition over the objections of a wide range of Census stakeholders. This bipartisan opposition included 161 Democratic and Republican mayors, six former Census directors who served in Democratic and Republican administrations, 19 attorneys general, and several dozen business leaders from across the country. During a March budget hearing, Secretary Ross himself acknowledged that asking about citizenship on the Census could negatively impact the overall response rate.

The Department of Justice described a citizenship question as necessary for enforcing the Voting Rights Act. This is inaccurate. No question on citizenship has appeared on the version of the decennial Census sent to every household in the country since 1950, and more importantly, a citizenship question has not been necessary to enforce the Voting Rights Act. Both the Justice Department and civil rights groups have successfully brought litigation to enforce the provisions of the VRA since its enactment in 1965 – without a mandatory citizenship question on the decennial census. Information on citizenship is available through other surveys that the Census Bureau conducts, including the American Community Survey. Should the Department of Justice require that information, it is available without endangering the success and accuracy of the 2020 Census.

The importance of an accurate Census – which is designed to count people, not only citizens -- count cannot be overstated. Florida receives nearly \$30 billion for the 16 largest Census-guided, federally

funded programs each year. These funds are used for programs that impact every Floridian, including health center programs, CHIP, foster care, special education grants, highway planning and construction, and Medicaid—to name a few. If people are undercounted on the Census, these critical programs will be underfunded for an entire decade.

There is currently a climate of fear in many hard-to-count communities. Despite guarantees of confidentiality, respondents surveyed by the Census Bureau have reported an increased fear that their information would be shared with immigration officials. The non-response rate on citizenship questions on the American Community Survey has been steadily rising as the immigration debate (and increasing rhetoric about deportation) has become increasingly hostile in recent years. Bureau workers have also reported respondents abandoning meetings on other subjects—leaving Bureau employees alone in their homes—when the subject of immigration or citizenship is raised. Adding this question plays into existing fears and jeopardizes the accuracy of the 2020 Census in every state and community by deterring many people—citizens and non-citizens—from responding.

The Constitution requires a complete count of all persons in the country, both citizens and non-citizens alike. The decision to add a citizenship question (especially now that issues of immigration and citizenship are the subject of intense debate in Congress) makes it unlikely that the 2020 Census will result in an accurate count and, therefore, deprive many Florida communities of funding for a variety of services to which they would be entitled. We strongly urge members of the Florida delegation to exercise legislative authority to reject this untested, late addition to the 2020 Census. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Kira Romero-Craft at kromero@latinojustice.org.

Sincerely,

Kira Romero-Craft, Managing Attorney
Latino Justice

Nancy G. Abudu, Legal Director
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Florida

Shalini Agarwal, Managing Attorney, Florida
Southern Poverty Law Center

Linda Geller-Schwartz, Florida State Policy Advocate
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Jackie Colon, Florida Director
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Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Senator Rubio,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Ted Yoho
511 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Yoho,

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable John Rutherford
230 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Rutherford,

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Al Lawson
1337 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Lawson,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
1524 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative DeSantis,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Stephanie Murphy
1237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

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The Honorable Bill Posey
2150 Cannon House Office Building
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Nancy Batista, Florida State Director
Mi Familia Vota Education Fund

Liza McClenaghan, State Chair
Common Cause Florida

Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
Organize Florida Education Fund



April 11, 2018

The Honorable Darren Soto
1429 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Soto,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced this addition over the objections of a wide range of Census stakeholders. This bipartisan opposition included 161 Democratic and Republican mayors, six former Census directors who served in Democratic and Republican administrations, 19 attorneys general, and several dozen business leaders from across the country. During a March budget hearing, Secretary Ross himself acknowledged that asking about citizenship on the Census could negatively impact the overall response rate.

The Department of Justice described a citizenship question as necessary for enforcing the Voting Rights Act. This is inaccurate. No question on citizenship has appeared on the version of the decennial Census sent to every household in the country since 1950, and more importantly, a citizenship question has not been necessary to enforce the Voting Rights Act. Both the Justice Department and civil rights groups have successfully brought litigation to enforce the provisions of the VRA since its enactment in 1965 – without a mandatory citizenship question on the decennial census. Information on citizenship is available through other surveys that the Census Bureau conducts, including the American Community Survey. Should the Department of Justice require that information, it is available without endangering the success and accuracy of the 2020 Census.

The importance of an accurate Census – which is designed to count people, not only citizens -- count cannot be overstated. Florida receives nearly \$30 billion for the 16 largest Census-guided, federally

funded programs each year. These funds are used for programs that impact every Floridian, including health center programs, CHIP, foster care, special education grants, highway planning and construction, and Medicaid—to name a few. If people are undercounted on the Census, these critical programs will be underfunded for an entire decade.

There is currently a climate of fear in many hard-to-count communities. Despite guarantees of confidentiality, respondents surveyed by the Census Bureau have reported an increased fear that their information would be shared with immigration officials. The non-response rate on citizenship questions on the American Community Survey has been steadily rising as the immigration debate (and increasing rhetoric about deportation) has become increasingly hostile in recent years. Bureau workers have also reported respondents abandoning meetings on other subjects—leaving Bureau employees alone in their homes—when the subject of immigration or citizenship is raised. Adding this question plays into existing fears and jeopardizes the accuracy of the 2020 Census in every state and community by deterring many people—citizens and non-citizens—from responding.

The Constitution requires a complete count of all persons in the country, both citizens and non-citizens alike. The decision to add a citizenship question (especially now that issues of immigration and citizenship are the subject of intense debate in Congress) makes it unlikely that the 2020 Census will result in an accurate count and, therefore, deprive many Florida communities of funding for a variety of services to which they would be entitled. We strongly urge members of the Florida delegation to exercise legislative authority to reject this untested, late addition to the 2020 Census. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Kira Romero-Craft at kromero@latinojustice.org.

Sincerely,

Kira Romero-Craft, Managing Attorney
Latino Justice

Nancy G. Abudu, Legal Director
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Florida

Shalini Agarwal, Managing Attorney, Florida
Southern Poverty Law Center

Linda Geller-Schwartz, Florida State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women

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Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
Organize Florida Education Fund



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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Val Demings
238 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Demings,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Daniel Webster
1210 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Webster,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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Common Cause Florida

Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
Organize Florida Education Fund



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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Gus M. Bilirakis
2112 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Bilirakis,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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Sincerely,

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Latino Justice

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Shalini Agarwal, Managing Attorney, Florida
Southern Poverty Law Center

Linda Geller-Schwartz, Florida State Policy Advocate
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Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
Organize Florida Education Fund



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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Charlie Crist
427 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Crist,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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Latino Justice

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Southern Poverty Law Center

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Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
Organize Florida Education Fund



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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Kathy Castor
2052 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Castor,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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FLORIDA MAJORITY
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Dennis Ross
436 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Ross,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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FLORIDA MAJORITY
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Vern Buchanan
2104 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Buchanan,

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NALEO Educational Fund

Manuel Hartman, President
South Florida LCLAA

Joey McKinnon, Florida Statewide Manager
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Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
Organize Florida Education Fund



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FLORIDA MAJORITY
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Tom Rooney
2160 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Rooney,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced this addition over the objections of a wide range of Census stakeholders. This bipartisan opposition included 161 Democratic and Republican mayors, six former Census directors who served in Democratic and Republican administrations, 19 attorneys general, and several dozen business leaders from across the country. During a March budget hearing, Secretary Ross himself acknowledged that asking about citizenship on the Census could negatively impact the overall response rate.

The Department of Justice described a citizenship question as necessary for enforcing the Voting Rights Act. This is inaccurate. No question on citizenship has appeared on the version of the decennial Census sent to every household in the country since 1950, and more importantly, a citizenship question has not been necessary to enforce the Voting Rights Act. Both the Justice Department and civil rights groups have successfully brought litigation to enforce the provisions of the VRA since its enactment in 1965 – without a mandatory citizenship question on the decennial census. Information on citizenship is available through other surveys that the Census Bureau conducts, including the American Community Survey. Should the Department of Justice require that information, it is available without endangering the success and accuracy of the 2020 Census.

The importance of an accurate Census – which is designed to count people, not only citizens -- count cannot be overstated. Florida receives nearly \$30 billion for the 16 largest Census-guided, federally

funded programs each year. These funds are used for programs that impact every Floridian, including health center programs, CHIP, foster care, special education grants, highway planning and construction, and Medicaid—to name a few. If people are undercounted on the Census, these critical programs will be underfunded for an entire decade.

There is currently a climate of fear in many hard-to-count communities. Despite guarantees of confidentiality, respondents surveyed by the Census Bureau have reported an increased fear that their information would be shared with immigration officials. The non-response rate on citizenship questions on the American Community Survey has been steadily rising as the immigration debate (and increasing rhetoric about deportation) has become increasingly hostile in recent years. Bureau workers have also reported respondents abandoning meetings on other subjects—leaving Bureau employees alone in their homes—when the subject of immigration or citizenship is raised. Adding this question plays into existing fears and jeopardizes the accuracy of the 2020 Census in every state and community by deterring many people—citizens and non-citizens—from responding.

The Constitution requires a complete count of all persons in the country, both citizens and non-citizens alike. The decision to add a citizenship question (especially now that issues of immigration and citizenship are the subject of intense debate in Congress) makes it unlikely that the 2020 Census will result in an accurate count and, therefore, deprive many Florida communities of funding for a variety of services to which they would be entitled. We strongly urge members of the Florida delegation to exercise legislative authority to reject this untested, late addition to the 2020 Census. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Kira Romero-Craft at kromero@latinojustice.org.

Sincerely,

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Latino Justice

Nancy G. Abudu, Legal Director
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Florida

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Brian Mast
2182 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Mast,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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FLORIDA MAJORITY
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Francis Rooney
120 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Rooney,

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Stephanie Porta, Executive Director
Organize Florida Education Fund



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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings
2353 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Hastings,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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Latino Justice

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FLORIDA MAJORITY
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Lois Frankel
1037 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Frankel,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Ted Deutch
2447 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Deutch,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
1114 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Wasserman Schultz,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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FLORIDA MAJORITY
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Frederica Wilson
2445 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Wilson,

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Latino Justice

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Shalini Agarwal, Managing Attorney, Florida
Southern Poverty Law Center

Linda Geller-Schwartz, Florida State Policy Advocate
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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
440 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced this addition over the objections of a wide range of Census stakeholders. This bipartisan opposition included 161 Democratic and Republican mayors, six former Census directors who served in Democratic and Republican administrations, 19 attorneys general, and several dozen business leaders from across the country. During a March budget hearing, Secretary Ross himself acknowledged that asking about citizenship on the Census could negatively impact the overall response rate.

The Department of Justice described a citizenship question as necessary for enforcing the Voting Rights Act. This is inaccurate. No question on citizenship has appeared on the version of the decennial Census sent to every household in the country since 1950, and more importantly, a citizenship question has not been necessary to enforce the Voting Rights Act. Both the Justice Department and civil rights groups have successfully brought litigation to enforce the provisions of the VRA since its enactment in 1965 – without a mandatory citizenship question on the decennial census. Information on citizenship is available through other surveys that the Census Bureau conducts, including the American Community Survey. Should the Department of Justice require that information, it is available without endangering the success and accuracy of the 2020 Census.

The importance of an accurate Census – which is designed to count people, not only citizens -- count cannot be overstated. Florida receives nearly \$30 billion for the 16 largest Census-guided, federally

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Carlos Curbelo
1404 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Curbelo,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
2206 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Ros-Lehtinen,

We write to express deep concern over the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial Census. The addition of an untested question at this late stage of Census planning, after the launch of the end-to-end test for 2020 operations, will exacerbate distrust of the census process in communities that are considered hard-to-count. To ensure that Floridians get the funding and representation they deserve, we ask that you take action to protect the accuracy and prevent the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census.

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Neal Dunn
423 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Dunn,

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April 11, 2018



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The Honorable Matt Gaetz
507 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Representative Gaetz,

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