Administrative Record on Commerce Secretary's
Decision to Add a Citizenship Question to 2020 Census
Census Project Fact Sheet
June 2018

Census Project stakeholders and others have inquired about the Commerce Department's release of the official administrative record documenting the process leading up to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross's decision to add a question about citizenship status to the 2020 Census form. A number of recent press accounts have focused on portions of the record that call into question the scientific underpinning of the Secretary's decision.

The release is part of a lawsuit filed by the State of New York and 18 other states, the District of Columbia, nine cities, four counties, and the bipartisan U.S. Conference of Mayors in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, seeking to remove the citizenship status question from the upcoming decennial census.

The Census Project focuses on the potential fiscal impact of the citizenship question on the 2020 Census, or any related impact on the appropriations process. Our primary mission has always been securing adequate funding for the Census Bureau to effectively plan, manage and carry out its critical missions and surveys.

In that regard, we are concerned about issues raised in a memo by the Census Bureau's Chief Scientist and Associate Director for Research and Methodology, wherein he asserted that the new question would increase the cost of the 2020 count by at least $27.5 million, and likely much more, over the current cost estimate. We will keep our stakeholders apprised of any developments in the appropriations process during the coming weeks with respect to FY 2019 funding for the Census Bureau on this and any other matters.

We encourage Census Project stakeholders to follow our colleagues at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, who are organizing efforts specifically on the citizenship question and have produced a useful fact sheet on the issue.

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