



August 7, 2018

Ms. Jennifer Jessup
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
Department of Commerce
Room 6616
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: Comments on Proposed Information Collection on 2020 Census, Docket No. USBC-2018-0005

Dear Ms. Jessup:

On behalf of the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association, I submit the following comments on the Proposed Information Collection on 2020 Census, Docket No. USBC-2018-0005. We urge the Census Bureau to remove the proposed untested citizenship question from the 2020 Census form because it is unauthorized and will compromise the accuracy of the census for the state of Colorado and for the nation.

One of the missions of the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association is to fight for the equal protection of the Hispanic community under the law. To that end, the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association has historically tracked census-related issues since its founding in 1977 and has successfully intervened in court cases involving the census and apportionment of Representatives of Congress. A fair and accurate census is critical to the Hispanic community, and vital for society as a whole. As a result, the 2020 Census should not include an untested question on citizenship which experts have determined will jeopardize a successful population count.

The U.S. Constitution requires the federal government to conduct an “actual Enumeration” of the national population every ten years. This requires that every person is counted. To achieve that goal, the Census Bureau has not sought citizenship information on the decennial census form that goes to every household in the country since 1950. The Census Bureau is not only deviating from nearly seven decades of settled practice, it is also departing from its long-standing and well-established processes for revising the decennial census questionnaire. Decisions to change questions on the decennial census typically take several years to test, evaluate, and implement. But the decision here was impermissibly compressed into a rushed and unprecedented period of less than four months without following any of the normal processes for testing census questions.

The Colorado Hispanic Bar Association joins many other organizations in their concern that the addition of a citizenship question to the decennial census form will adversely affect participation rates and lead to increased non-response and decreased accuracy in the 2020 Census. In Colorado, 1 in 5 households did not mail back their 2010 Census questionnaire, and thus required the Census Bureau to conduct in-person follow-up. Immigrants account for 9.8% of Colorado’s population, and in 2014 about 200,000 immigrants in Colorado were undocumented.



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Over 275,000 Colorado residents, including 127,582 born in the United States, lived with at least one undocumented family member between 2010 and 2014. Because many immigrants live in mixed-status households that include U.S. citizen children, siblings, or spouses, adding a citizenship question increases the risk of undercounting both the citizens and noncitizens in these families.

An undercount in the decennial census will deprive Colorado residents of crucial federal funds for public education, healthcare, child care and many other federally-funded programs that tie allocations to data collected during the decennial census. It would also result in a loss of fair representation in Congress of Colorado under the Voting Rights Act.

An accurate census is essential to the state of Colorado and our country. For the reasons articulated above, the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association strongly opposes asking about citizenship status in the 2020 Census and urges the Census Bureau to remove the proposed citizenship question from the decennial form.

Sincerely,

/s Kathryn Starnella

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