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April 12, 2018

Over 300 Civil Rights, Faith, and Labor Leaders Demand Oversight on Census Citizenship Question

WASHINGTON – Over 300 civil rights, faith, and labor groups are calling on Congress to hold oversight hearings on Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross’s decision to include a new citizenship question on the 2020 Census. The signatories say that adding the untested question would jeopardize the accuracy of the census count in all communities for the next 10 years.

In identical letters to the chairs and ranking members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform – Senators Ron Johnson and Claire McCaskill and Representatives Trey Gowdy and Elijah Cummings – the groups asked for lawmakers to ask Secretary Ross to address the following issues:

- Why he made this decision despite widespread objections from stakeholders, former Census Bureau directors, and career staff at the Census Bureau;
- Why he believes the citizenship question is “well-tested” when in fact the question has never been tested in a contemporary census-like environment;
- How the inclusion of the question will impact the bureau’s ability to reach and count all communities equally well, especially in the current contemporary environment of fear.

The letter goes on to say that Secretary Ross must show that political motivations did not “improperly taint” the decision to add a citizenship question to the decennial census. Last month, the Trump campaign sent emails to supporters promoting the idea and later celebrating the secretary’s decision.

“‘The decennial census is not a political function; it is a constitutionally mandated process to count every person in the United States,’” the letter states. “‘While the census—as the basis for political apportionment and equal representation—has political consequences, the conduct of the census must be strictly nonpartisan and non-political.’”

The letter to the Senate committee is available here, the letter to the House committee is available here, and the signatories are below:

18MillionRising.org
9to5 WI
9to5, National Association of Working Women
AcademyHealth
ACCESS
Access Now
Action Ridge, A social action group in Park Ridge, Illinois
Adhikaar
Advancement Project California
Advocates for Children and Youth
Advocates for Children and Youth (Maryland)
AFL-CIO
African American Ministers In Action
AgeOptions
AJC (American Jewish Committee)
Alianza Americas
Alliance for Climate Education (ACE)
American Anthropological Association
American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Foundation for the Blind
American Library Association
American Planning Association
American Public Health Association
American Society on Aging
American Sociological Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Anti-Defamation League
APACEvotes
APANO (Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon)
Arab American Institute
The Arc of the United States
Archivists Roundtable of Metropolitan New York (ART)
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Arkansas United Community Coalition
Asia Pacific Cultural Center
Asian American Federation
Asian American Organizing Project
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote
Asian Community Alliance Inc
Asian Community Development Council (ACDC)
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Pacific American Caucus
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Asian Pacific Community in Action
Asian Pacific Development Center
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association, Austin TX Chapter
Asian Services In Action, Inc.
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users (APDU)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
AZ AAPI Democratic Party Caucus
AZ Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote Table
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Berkeley Media Studies Group
Breakaway Research Group
California Calls
California Calls Education Fund
Cambodian Women Networking Asso.
Campaign for Youth Justice
Campaign Legal Center
The Census Project
Center for Democracy & Technology
Center for Media and Democracy
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Urban and Racial Equity
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Child Care Aware of America
Children's Advocacy Alliance - NV
Children's Defense Fund
Chinese Community Center, Houston
Chinese for Affirmative Action
CIRC
Claritas
CLASP
CLC
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalition for the Peoples Agenda
Coalition on Human Needs
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Community Action Against Rape DBA The Rape Crisis Center
Community Catalyst
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Congregation Rodeph Sholom
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Constitutional Accountability Center
Cook Inlet Housing Authority
Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER)
CREDO
Crescent City Media Group
CYR & Assoc. Human Services Consulting
Daily Kos
The Data Center
Data You Can Use, Inc.
Decision Demographics
Defending Rights & Dissent
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
Democracy Forward Foundation
Democracy Initiative
Demos
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
End Domestic AbuseWI
Equal Justice Society
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality California
Equality North Carolina
Every Child Matters
Faith in Public Life
Families USA
Family Focused Treatment Association
Feminist Majority
FIRM (Fair Immigration Reform Movement)
Florida Asian Services Center
Food Research & Action Center
Forum for Youth Investment
Franciscan Action Network
Free Press Action Fund
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth - United States
Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance
Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO)
Government Information Watch
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Hep Free Hawaii
Hepatitis Education Project
Herd on the Hill
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic Organization for Leadership & Action (HOLA)
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters - USA-JPIC
HOPE For Nevada
Human Impact Partners
Human Rights Watch
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Impact Fund
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Indivisible Baltimore
International Children Assistance Network
International Rescue Committee
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
John H. Thompson, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau - August 2013 to June 2017
Justice in Aging
Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Appleseed
Kansas Center for Economic Growth
KIDS COUNT in Delaware
Kids Forward
Lambda Legal
Laotian American National Alliance
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Latinx Voice WI
Laurin Associates
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc.
LCLAA
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of Women Voters of the United States
Let America Vote
Lisa Gibson, Indivisible Hawaii
Los Angeles LGBT Center
MA Voter Table
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
Maxfield Research and Consulting LLC
Mi Familia Vota
MinKwon Center for Community Action
Minnesota Council on Foundations
MomsRising
Musikanten
Muslim Public Affairs Council
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund
National Action Network
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD)
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Consumers League
The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Human Services Assembly
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium
National League of Cities
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Urban Indian Family Coalition
National Urban League
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
Nazareth Housing Services
NC Child
NC Counts
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New America - Public Interest Technology
The New Florida Majority Education Fund
New Mexico Asian Family Center
New Mexico Voices For Children
New York Immigration Coalition
North Carolina Asian Americans Together (NCAAT)
NY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TABLE
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
OFA_WI
Ohio Voter Rights Coalition
One Wisconsin Now
Organizing for Action
Our Wisconsin Revolution
Partnership For America's Children
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
People For the American Way
PFLAG National
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
PolicyLink
Poligon Education Fund
Population Association of America
positively kids
Prison Policy Initiative
Progressive Hmong American Organizers
Project On Government Oversight
ProLiteracy
Public Citizen
public health
Public Health Institute
Public Justice Center
Purdue Marion & Associates
Research Advisory Services, Inc.
Research Allies for Lifelong Learning
The Resurrection Project
Revolving Door Project
Ribbon Demographics, LLC
Rid Racism Milwaukee
RLS Demographics, Inc.
Rock the Vote
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
SEIU 32BJ
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Sierra Club
SIKH AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND
The Sikh Coalition
Sinsinawa Dominican Peace and Justice Office
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of New York
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, IA
Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Sisters of the Holy Cross
Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, New Windsor, NY
SiX Action
Society of American Archivists
SocioEnergetics Foundation
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
SOUTH ASIAN NETWORK
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Southern Coalition for Social Justice
Southern Poverty Law Center
Srs. of Mary Reparatrix
State Innovation Exchange (SiX)
State Voices
Sunlight Foundation
Tangible Consulting Services
Texas Civil Rights Project
Texas Progressive Action Network
Theresa Nowlin
Transformative Justice Coalition
Union for Reform Judaism
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Women
United Neighborhood Houses of New York
The United States Conference of Mayors
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association
URI Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America
Vermont State Data Center
Virginia Civic Engagement Table
Voices for Progress
Voting Rights Institute
West Side Campaign Against Hunger
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign
Wisconsin Voices
World Without Genocide at Mitchell Hamline School of Law
YWCA Southeast Wisconsin
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE