



CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS
Michelle Lujan Grisham | Chairwoman
115TH CONGRESS

January 16, 2018

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Room 5421
Fourteenth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write to strongly oppose the Department of Justice's (DOJ) request to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. General Counsel Arthur Gary's December 12th letter claims that the addition of a citizenship question is needed to enforce Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in order to protect against racial discrimination in voting. The addition of a citizenship question only serves to instill fear among immigrant communities, decrease participation and negatively impact the outcome and accuracy of the 2020 Census.

The U.S. Census is completed every ten years to collect data that accurately reflects the total United States population, regardless of citizenship. Census questions undergo years of extensive review, including field testing and feedback from focus groups. Adding an untested question could seriously impair the Bureau's ability to produce an accurate population count and result in increased costs to the Census.

DOJ's claims that the citizenship question is needed to enforce Section 2 of the VRA and to prevent racial discrimination in voting are unfounded. The Census Bureau already collects information on citizenship through the American Community Survey (ACS). This ongoing yearly survey provides more detailed information than the decennial Census, which enables the Census to focus more on population counts. The ACS's reliable citizenship data was used in 2010 by both DOJ and civil rights groups to monitor compliance with the VRA and will once again be utilized for the same purpose in 2020.

The Trump administration's immigration policies have already instilled fear among immigrant communities. Immigrant communities are less likely to report crimes, or even enroll their eligible U.S. citizen children in healthcare programs. Additionally, early surveys have documented that some immigrants are afraid to provide information to Census employees because they are fearful of how the information may be used. This is a concerning trend and would no doubt be worsened if a citizenship question was included in the 2020 Census.

We urge you to oppose the DOJ's request for a citizenship question in the 2020 Census. As you work to ensure a fair and accurate census that encourages full participation, we believe that including a citizenship question would only serve to suppress participation and result in inaccurate data that does not truly reflect the makeup of our nation.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



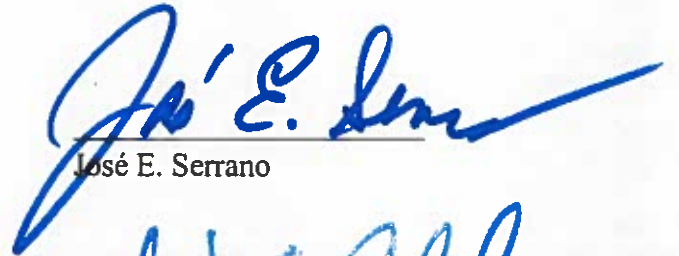
Darren Soto
CHC Civil Rights and Voting Rights Chair



Michelle Lujan Grisham
CHC Chair



Luis V. Gutiérrez



José E. Serrano



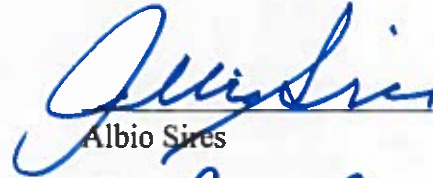
Grace F. Napolitano



Salud O. Carbajal



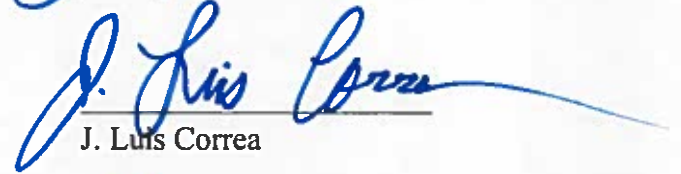
Lucille Roybal-Allard



Albio Sires



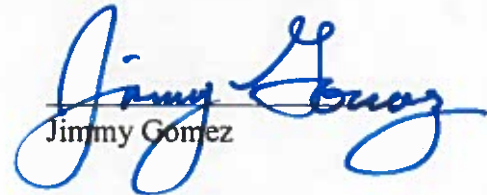
Adriano Espaillat



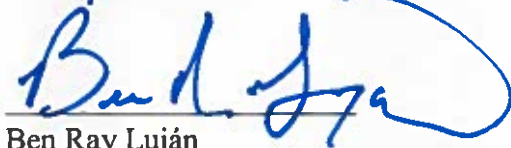
J. Luis Correa



Tony Cárdenas



Jimmy Gómez



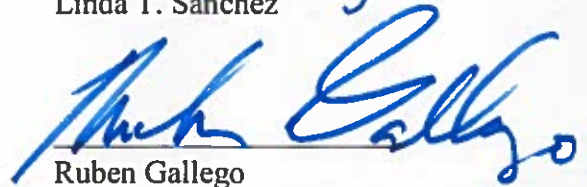
Ben Ray Luján



Linda T. Sánchez



Juan Vargas



Ruben Gallego



Norma Torres



Nanette Diaz Barragán



Gregorio Kili Camacho Sablan