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The Statistical Community Raises Alarm on the Impact of New Question on 2020 Census Results

Statement of Count on Stats Regarding Citizenship Question

ALEXANDRIA, VA, March 28, 2018 — On March 26, the [Department of Commerce announced](#) the addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, startling Count on Stats and the statistical community. While many have weighed in on the potential political impacts of this decision, a further critically important dimension warrants special attention. Should the addition of this question have the effect of reducing voluntary participation and response rates, the Census data may be fundamentally flawed.

The effect would be felt by millions of Americans. For example, many federal programs, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, are directly tied to the population number reported by the Census. An undercount would have a [significant effect](#) on federal funding for these financial assistance programs as well as on resources for schools, hospitals and other state and community needs and priorities.

Count on Stats sees this change as a threat to the federal statistical system and an issue that transcends political parties. The potential impact on federal funds and the increased cost to taxpayers and federal programs would be significant. Count on Stats urges the Administration to reconsider this change and instead focus every effort on maximizing participation to ensure a fair and accurate 2020 Census.

In addition to our appraisal of this decision, our partners have also voiced concerns regarding this issue and have responded as follows:

- American Sociological Association (ASA) — [Inside Higher Ed](#)
- [Consortium of Social Science Associations \(COSSA\)](#)
- [Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics \(COPAFS\)](#)
- [The Insights Association](#)
- [Population Association of America \(PAA\)](#)

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About Count on Stats

The American Statistical Association (ASA), in partnership with the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Sociological Association (ASA), Association of Population Centers (APC), The Association of Public Data Users (APDU), Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC), Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS), Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), Insights Association, National Association for Business Economics (NABE), Population Association of America (PAA), Society of American Business Editors and Writers (SABEW), is defending the system and its important work through a public outreach initiative to enhance awareness of the importance, reliability, and trustworthiness of government data. Count on Stats is designed to elevate the public discourse about government data and the value of the system.

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