

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
PRESS RELEASE**

**National Scientific Organizations File Amicus Brief Objecting to  
Inclusion of Citizenship Question in the 2020 Census**

*Leading science groups say citizenship question will damage  
the scientific integrity of the U.S. Census*

**(November 2, 2018)** –The [American Sociological Association](#), the [American Statistical Association](#), and the [Population Association of America](#) this week filed an amicus brief in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York supporting a challenge to the late addition of a citizenship question in the 2020 Census.

“As three of the primary scientific societies with expertise in the execution and importance of the decennial census, we are very concerned for the lack of scientific justification for the untested addition of the citizenship question to the questionnaire,” said Ron Wasserstein, executive director of the American Statistical Association. “It is also our scientific judgment the additional question is likely to undermine the quality of the census data, which will potentially have wide ramifications for the decade to come. Census data determine representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and inform allotment of federal assistance as well as decisions for a wide variety of economic, social, and other sectors, both public and private.”

The brief emphasizes the importance of testing survey questions and clarifies that citizenship data is already available through other sources. “It is unprecedented in modern census taking to add a question at such a late point in the decennial process,” said Nancy Kidd, executive director of The American Sociological Association. “If the U.S. Department of Commerce fails to submit a question to rigorous testing, it fails to fulfill its constitutional mandate to produce an accurate count of the population. Further, there are existing data sources that can be used to measure citizenship, rendering this addition to the 2020 Census fundamentally unnecessary.”

Further, the brief articulates concerns about jeopardizing strong response rates. “Based on documented experience with other surveys, social scientists have observed that citizenship questions suppress response rates and provide unreliable data,” said Wendy Manning, president of the Population Association of America. “Further, adding questions to any survey increases costs exponentially.”

Including a citizenship question on the 2020 Census will fundamentally undermine the integrity of the data, which will have profound implications for American society.

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### **About the American Sociological Association**

The American Sociological Association, founded in 1905, is a non-profit membership association dedicated to serving sociologists in their work, advancing sociology as a science and profession, and promoting the contributions to and use of sociology by society. Learn more: <http://www.asanet.org>

### **About the American Statistical Association**

With more than 18,000 members, the American Statistical Association is the world's largest community of statisticians, the "Big Tent for Statistics." It is the oldest scientific professional association in the country. Since its founding in Boston in 1839, the ASA has supported excellence in the development, application, and dissemination of statistical science through [meetings](#), [publications](#), [membership services](#), [education](#), [accreditation](#), and [advocacy](#). Its members are primarily in the United States, though there are 90 countries having ASA members. Learn more: <http://www.amstat.org>

### **About the Population Association of America**

The Population Association of America (PAA) is a nonprofit, scientific, professional organization established in 1930 to support the scientific study of the human population. PAA is an organization of professionals from multiple disciplines including demographers, sociologists, economists, public health professionals, and others engaged in research and education in the scientific study of population. Our common purpose is to advance knowledge and understanding of the causes and consequences of population composition, processes, and change. Learn more: <http://www.populationassociation.org>

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