



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF THE UNITED STATES

May 10, 2018

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To: Members of the U.S. House Oversight and Government Reform Committee

From: Chris Carson, President

Re: Remove the Citizenship Question from the 2020 Census

The League of Women Voters commends the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee for holding a hearing on the inclusion of a citizenship question on the U.S. Census. We look forward to the continued hearing coverage scheduled for Friday, May 18. As you move forward with the committee process we would like to highlight the following points.

Chairman Gowdy's willingness to subpoena, John Gore, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division is key to discovering the motivation behind including the citizenship question. Mr. Gore is the architect behind the inclusion of the proposed question. The League will be watching when the hearing continues and we look forward to members of the committee continuing to ask the tough and necessary questions about the inclusion of the proposed citizenship question.

The League believes including a question pertaining to citizenship in the 2020 Census will cause participation to plummet and threaten the accuracy of the Census. Census data is not only used to draw state and congressional districts based on population, but it is also used by local governments to plan for public safety and make investments in the future of their communities. An undercount of persons in any given area could result in inadequate disaster responders, insufficient resources for transportation, education and impacts to the overall health and safety of communities.

An accurate Census count is critical to all American communities. An accurate count is too important to threaten the results with this political move. The last time the Census included a question about citizenship was in 1950. Well before the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA). There is no justification to the Department of Justice's claims that adding a citizenship question is necessary to enforce the VRA.

The League commends Chairman Gowdy, Ranking Member Cummings and the rest of the committee for taking this issue seriously. We urge you to continue to shed light on the process and demand the documentation and answers justifying the decision to include this question. Americans have the right to know why government officials are interested in including this question for the first time in almost seventy years. We look forward to the committee continuing the hearing on May 18<sup>th</sup> with Acting Assistant Attorney General Gore in attendance.

It is up to Congress to exercise oversight authority over the Census Bureau and the League calls on this Committee to use their power and remove the citizenship question from the 2020 Census.