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The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.
Secretary, Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Steven Dillingham
Director, U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, D.C. 20233

Dear Secretary Ross and Director Dillingham:

The African American Mayors Association (AAMA) and its Board of Trustees writes to urge the Department of Commerce to withdraw the citizenship question from the 2020 Census questionnaire, as it will have far reaching adverse consequences for Black, Latino and Asian American communities over the next decade.

The Constitution requires an accurate enumeration of all persons residing in the United States every ten years. Collected Census data is then used to reapportion seats in the House of Representatives, draw legislative districts and distribute over \$700 billion in federal funding each year. The inability to secure an accurate count of constituents nationwide will pose threats to fair representation and the level of services, resources and federal dollars that municipalities receive.

The Department of Commerce announced the citizenship question will be reinstated for the 2020 decennial census questionnaire to help enforce the Voting Rights Act. However, we are concerned the census will be used to further energize this Administration's aggressive anti-immigrant policies. The sudden inclusion of the citizenship question is alarming for diverse communities of U.S. citizens and immigrants, which will ultimately reduce census response rates as the Census Bureau has noted in past findings.

The citizenship question is detrimental to the functioning of governments, and their leaders, who seek to adequately serve and protect their constituents. The question will not only impact Latino and Afro-Latinos, but there are also millions of African diaspora and Asian immigrants that stand to be impacted by a massive undercounting. Our communities cannot afford to be invisible, uncounted, underserved and under resourced for the next decade.

AAMA stands to ensure the integrity of the census will not be compromised by the addition of the unprecedented and unnecessary citizenship question. We ask that the priority of the questionnaire be to conduct an accurate and comprehensive count with the intent to best serve our nation.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Mash Sykes, Esq.
Executive Director
African American Mayors Association

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