July 2, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
US Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross,

We write to express our deep concerns about tweets from President Trump in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling to block the addition of a question on citizenship in the 2020 Census in Department of Commerce v. New York. We find his threat to delay the census extremely troubling. We urge you to continue census preparation without delay and submit the census questionnaire without a citizenship question for printing on or before July 4, 2019.

The census is America’s largest peacetime undertaking consisting of numerous interconnected operations. The next nine months are the most critical for decennial preparation in the entire decade-long cycle. During this time, the Census Bureau must finish hiring staff, execute a comprehensive communications campaign, finalize partnerships with local outreach groups and develop IT contingency plans. These critical operations and more depend on having a finalized questionnaire, and that process must begin in a matter of days. Any attempt to delay the census only threatens the success of the overall count at the expense of taxpayers.

Furthermore, we do not accept the President’s insinuation that he has the authority to delay the census. The census date of April 1st is codified in Title 13 of the US Code. Only Congress has the authority to delay the census and must do so through the legislative process, which we have no intention of doing.

Throughout the litigation process surrounding the inclusion of a citizenship question, lawyers for the Department of Commerce repeatedly underscored the importance of reaching a final decision before July so that the census forms could go to print on time. That decision has been rendered, definitively. Therefore, we urge you to move forward without delay and begin printing the census questionnaire without a citizenship question on or before July 4, 2019 as required to faithfully conduct the Census. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress