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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

New Documents Confirm Trump Administration’s Discriminatory Reasoning for Adding Citizenship Question to 2020 Census

Today, along with millions of others, the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF) learned damning information about the political and racially discriminatory motives behind the push to add a citizenship status question to the 2020 census. [Materials uncovered](#) from a deceased Republican strategist reveal exactly what LDF stated in its March 15, 2019 [letter to the Commerce Department](#), namely that the Trump administration’s attempt to ask individuals about their citizenship status was, “the most flagrant instance of government manipulation of the Census for partisan gain.” LDF voiced similar concerns in its [amicus brief](#) to the Supreme Court where it debunked the myth that the citizenship question would enhance Voting Rights Act enforcement and highlighted the devastating impact it could have on communities of color. As the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California stated when striking it down, “inclusion of the citizenship question on the 2020 Census threatens the very foundation of our democratic system.”

“Recently unearthed documents make clear that the basis for the citizenship question was a 2015 study stating, in no uncertain terms, that the question would be ‘advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites,’” said Janai Nelson, Associate-Director Counsel at LDF. “These files, if authenticated, confirm the true discriminatory intent of the Trump administration and underscore the need for the Supreme Court to affirm the ruling of the [lower court](#) in blocking the addition of the citizenship question. We remain steadfast in our opposition to the inclusion of this question and this new development simply supports why we have opposed it all along.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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