



For Immediate Release
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LDF Responds to Citizenship Status Question Inclusion on 2020 Census

The U.S. Commerce Secretary has announced a plan to add a citizenship status question to the 2020 Census. LDF Senior Counsel [Leah Aden](#) issued the following statement:

“The decision to include a question about citizenship status on the 2020 Census is the absolute wrong move and greatly interferes with the Census Bureau’s obligation to conduct a fair and accurate Census count. In this xenophobic and racist climate, the addition of this untimely, unnecessary, and fiscally wasteful question will reasonably cause widespread fear in communities of color to engage with the Census Bureau around the count, likely leading people to avoid the Census completely. This will be to the detriment of us all. Even prior to this decision, there has been a historic undercount of Black people and other people of color around decennial counts that the Census Bureau should be spending its time fixing — for example with adequate funding and non-partisan leadership — rather than exacerbating as with this decision.

“Millions across all sectors of our society rely on the Census Bureau for comprehensive, accurate data about our country, which ultimately helps to ensure equal protection and representation and distribute billions of dollars in federal funding. We cannot ignore that America has a sordid and shameful history of failing to count Black people as whole. The Constitution demands, however, that for the purposes of the Census, *everyone* must be counted. We cannot – and will not – return to the past. LDF, along with our civil rights and pro-democracy allies, leaders in the business community, state and local officials (from both major political parties) and many others, refuse to sit idly by as the monumental work of one of the most important federal agencies is undermined. Collectively, we will use all the tools at our disposal – including litigation and legislation – to ensure that the Census Bureau can do their work accurately and legally. We urge Congress to fix this problem immediately.”

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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.