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IDRA Statement on Education Impact of Supreme Court Decision Blocking Citizenship Question on 2020 Census

June 27, 2019 - Today, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the addition of a question to the 2020 decennial census about whether or not respondents are U.S. citizens, a question that would have put education resources at risk for millions of Americans. In the case, [Department of Commerce v. New York](#), the Supreme Court held that the Trump Administration's decision to add the citizenship question "seems to have been contrived." While the court has rejected the attempt to add a citizenship question now, it has not prohibited the inclusion of the question in the future. The Supreme Court sent the case back down to the lower court for further review.



"The addition of a citizenship question would be harmful not only for children, Latinos and immigrants but also the cities and states in which they live," said IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno. "To achieve a fair and accurate census count, we will continue to work with our allies to ensure all children are counted and have access to equitable and excellent education opportunities."

Census experts predict that the 2020 Census will result in a larger undercount than in previous census years. Even though the census form will not include the question about citizenship, experts warn that the current political climate - e.g., the

Administration's policies toward immigrants and the significant budget cuts experienced by the Census Bureau - could result in lower census participation by undocumented or mixed-status families.

The Census Bureau collects counts of people through mail-in questionnaires, and for the first time in the history of the U.S. Census, respondents will have the option of completing the 2020 Census form online. For those who neither complete their form by mail or online, the Census Bureau deploys thousands of census takers to visit non-respondents in their homes. But, there are still large numbers of people who will not complete the census form and will not answer the door when a census taker comes to their home.

The census in previous years has already significantly undercounted adult Black males, children, Latinos and immigrants, which impacts distribution of critical education dollars and political representation.

[One study](#) estimates that the citizenship question could result in an undercount of more than 6 million Latinos in the country, including many children. The Census Bureau estimates that the 2010 Census undercounted 1.4 million children ages 0 to 9 years old. Undercounted children are more likely to be children of color, live in complex households and live in poverty. Many of these children would benefit most from having an accurate count. There are approximately 300 federal programs that allocate over \$800 billion based on decennial census data, including funds for Title I grants for low-income students, special education programs, Head Start, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and *Bilingual Education Act* grants ([Reamer, 2018](#)).

Census undercounts also impact state-level programs. For example, under Texas' House Bill 3, the new school funding bill signed this month, the state will use U.S. Census data to calculate the compensatory education funds allocated to school districts to support programs for low-income students and students at risk of dropping out of school. An undercount in the 2020 Census will neglect students whose schools are eligible for compensatory education funds, thus shortchanging Texas communities, school districts and the students they serve.

"Even after today's decision, state and local governments should still deploy as many resources as possible to ensure the constitutionally-mandated decennial census achieves a complete count," Ms. Moreno said. "Our democracy relies on accurate census counts and on an educated public."

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