



NEWS RELEASE

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New Emails Show U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross Misled Congress and Public about Decision to Add Citizenship Question

Claims that consideration of a citizenship question addition initially originated from the U.S. Department of Justice prove untrue by release of latest emails

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released a statement from Chief Executive Officer Arturo Vargas following the release of internal emails from U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to his staff addressing the addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census:

“The release of these internal emails makes clear that Secretary Wilbur Ross intentionally misled Congress and all Americans about the timing and motivations for adding a citizenship question to the 2020 Census.

“In his previous [communications](#), Secretary Ross claimed that the initial consideration of a citizenship question addition began in December 2017 following the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) request for citizenship data to be collected at the block level in order to better enforce the Voting Rights Act (VRA).

“These [emails](#) confirm that the addition of a citizenship question to enforce the VRA is untrue and corroborates what advocates have known for some time—that politics, not science, drove the decision to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census.

“Depressing the response rates of the nation’s second largest population group by adding a citizenship question during a time of heightened fear and distrust of the government will result in a less accurate census that costs taxpayers millions more. If we don’t reverse course now and stop the addition of a citizenship question, we seriously risk a failed Census 2020.

“We call on Congress to use its authority to conduct a thorough investigation to determine what additional information was knowingly withheld or misrepresented to Congress. The investigation should also assess the extent political motivations were the driving force behind the addition of a citizenship question to Census 2020.”

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About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit, non-partisan organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.