

Supreme Court Decision on Adding Citizenship Question to 2020 Census a Temporary Reprieve for Our Nation's Data Infrastructure

The American Statistical Association (ASA) and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) welcome today's Supreme Court decision to send the case back to the lower courts to consider the inclusion of a citizenship question in the 2020 Census.

The decision, though a temporary reprieve, brings us one step closer to ensuring the accuracy of the data used to determine representation in Congress and the annual allotment of more than \$880 billion in federal funds to states and local communities.

The ASA and AAPOR have strongly cautioned against the inclusion of the citizenship question at this late stage of the decennial census because the lack of scientific justification and the strong likelihood that census data quality will be compromised by its inclusion. The [Bureau itself estimates addition of the question](#) could now discourage a total of 3 million households, or 9 million people, from answering the census questionnaire. An incomplete census will force the government and the myriad users of census data to reckon with flawed data until the next census is conducted in 2030.

As the backbone of the data infrastructure supporting our nation's economy, health, and well-being, the census must be fair and accurate. Today's decision makes us optimistic that the professionals at the U.S. Census Bureau will be able to proceed with their important work without concern that an untested and scientifically unjustified question will hamper their efforts. But time is of the essence—with nine months to go to Census Day 2020—as this issue is directed back to district court. It is critical that planning for the census be able to move forward without the uncertainty that the citizenship question might still be included. The litigation, research, and public dialogue over the past year may well exert a chilling effect on the participation of hard-to-count people, including immigrants and noncitizens.

No matter the eventual outcome, we urge all residents of the United States to cooperate with and quickly respond to the 2020 Census next year in the spirit of good citizenship and the public good. We will redouble our support for the US Census Bureau and efforts to promote full public participation in the census. Everyone benefits from an accurate, non-partisan Census.

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About the American Statistical Association and American Association for Public Opinion Research

The ASA is the world's largest community of statisticians and the oldest continuously operating professional science society in the United States. Its members serve in industry, government and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information, please visit the ASA website at www.amstat.org.

AAPOR is the leading professional organization of public opinion and survey research professionals in the U.S., with members from academia, media, government, the non-profit sector and private industry. AAPOR promotes the sound and ethical conduct and use of public opinion research. Visit www.aapor.org for more information.

As part of ASA's commitment to support the importance of government statistics for evidence-based policymaking, ASA created [Count on Stats](http://www.countonstats.org). In partnership with over a dozen organizations, the initiative is designed to educate and inform the public about the critically important nature of federal data. Without federal agencies' data collection and analysis, we would not have key insights into nutrition, economic trends, community issues, public safety, agriculture, and countless other facets that are vital to our society. For additional information, please visit the Count on Stats website at www.countonstats.org.