


**REPORT OF THE
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

DATE: February 6, 2018

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, Intergovernmental Relations and Neighborhoods Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No: 18-0002-S8
Assignment No: 18-02-0099

SUBJECT: Resolution (Wesson-Cedillo) to OPPOSE the Department of Justice's proposal to include a citizenship question on the 2020 Census questionnaire

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Wesson-Cedillo) to include in the City's 2017-18 Federal Legislative Program, OPPOSITION to the Department of Justice's proposal to include a citizenship question on the 2020 Decennial Census questionnaire.

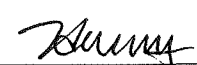
SUMMARY

According to the Resolution, the 2020 Census is the first Census that will be performed primarily electronically, which may create additional barriers for low-income and immigrant communities. The Resolution further states that this change to an electronic system may also be accompanied by a new citizenship question on the 2020 Census form that could dampen participation rates in immigrant communities because of the Trump administration's emphasis on deportation and border security. The Resolution notes that an accurate count is difficult to obtain and including an additional question increases the time to complete the process of being counted and could deter participation. Lastly, the Resolution states that the City has a long history of supporting immigrant communities through integration policies and programs. The Resolution therefore requests the City to oppose the Department of Justice's proposal to include a citizenship question on the 2020 Census.

BACKGROUND

On January 16, 2018, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to oppose the recent Department of Justice proposal to include a citizenship question on the 2020 Census form. Supervisor Janice Hahn opined "Whether unintentional or by design, including a citizenship question in the Census will not only result in an inaccurate count, it would deny communities with immigrant populations—like LA County—their fair share of Federal funding."

As of January 26, 2018, the request by the Department of Justice to include a citizenship question is under review by lawyers at the Commerce Department, where attorneys are evaluating the legal basis for the question. The census has not included a question related to citizenship for nearly 70 years. Opposing the citizenship question on the 2020 Census form is consistent with the City's previous actions of protecting immigrant communities from persecution and ensuring an accurate population count.


Henry Flatt
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Resolution (Wesson-Cedillo)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the Decennial Census is one of the key functions of the US government and is described in detail in the US Constitution to ensure accurate representation of people of the United States; and

WHEREAS, many of the communities in Los Angeles face socioeconomic and demographic challenges that require targeted outreach plans in order to adequately identify and serve the population; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Census is the first Census that will be performed primarily electronically, which creates additional barriers for low-income and immigrant communities; and

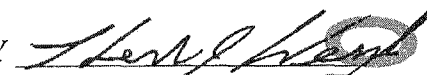
WHEREAS, the United States Department of Justice has proposed to include a citizenship question on the 2020 Census form, which may dampen participation rates in immigrant communities because of the Trump administration's emphasis on deportation and border security; and

WHEREAS, an accurate Census count is difficult to obtain, and adding additional questions increases the time required to complete the process of being counted and therefore deters participation; and

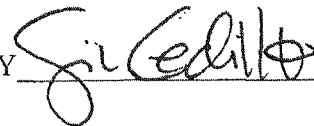
WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles has a long-standing history of supporting immigrant communities through inclusive integration policies and programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program OPPOSITION to the Department of Justice's proposal to include a citizenship question on the 2020 Census questionnaire.

PRESENTED BY


HERB J. WESSON, JR.
Councilmember, 10th District

SECONDED BY



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