

House Resolution 939

By: Representatives Marin of the 96th, Nguyen of the 89th, Lopez of the 99th, and Gonzalez of the 117th

A RESOLUTION

1 Strongly opposing a request by the United States Department of Justice to add a citizenship
2 question to Census 2020; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Executive Director Arturo Vargas of the National Association of Latino Elected
4 and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund released a statement on
5 January 5, 2018, outlining NALEO's opposition to a December 12, 2017, letter from the
6 Department of Justice requesting that a new citizenship question be added to the Census 2020
7 questionnaire; and

8 WHEREAS, adding an untested question regarding citizenship to the census questionnaire
9 less than three months before the United States Census Bureau must submit final wording
10 of the questionnaire to Congress would result in millions of wasted taxpayer dollars and in
11 significantly depressed response rates in our nation's decennial census count; and

12 WHEREAS, since the adoption of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution,
13 it has been mandated that all persons – regardless of race, citizenship, or legal status – be
14 included in the population count of the American people that is conducted every ten years;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, used for the purposes of Congressional reapportionment, legislative
17 redistricting, and the distribution of billions of dollars in federal funds, a fair and accurate
18 census is a pivotal civil rights issue for the nation's second largest population group and for
19 all Americans; and

20 WHEREAS, the Department of Justice inexplicably invokes upholding the Voting Rights Act
21 of 1965 as its justification for the request even though data on citizenship are available,
22 readily used in court litigation, and have been collected in the census "long form" for
23 decades, up until 2000 when the form was replaced by the American Community Survey;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, adding a citizenship question to the decennial questionnaire would increase the
26 respondent burden in 2020 and would duplicate the current efforts of the Census Bureau,
27 leading to increased waste of public funds; and

28 WHEREAS, each question on the decennial survey has been thoroughly tested to ensure that
29 it is well understood by the public and does not depress response rates, and adding any
30 question at this time – whether on the topic of citizenship or on any topic – would sabotage
31 the Census Bureau's efforts in implementing a re-engineered, high-tech enumeration strategy;
32 and

33 WHEREAS, the Census Bureau is already facing an uphill climb by being forced to conduct
34 the federal government's largest civilian mobilization in years with insufficient funding for
35 that task; and

36 WHEREAS, in conducting other surveys and experiments, Census Bureau field
37 representatives have reported an unprecedented fear among test respondents, and adding a
38 question on citizenship will exacerbate this fear and distrust in the Census, risking an
39 inaccurate count; and

40 WHEREAS, Americans are increasingly losing faith in the ability of the government to
41 protect their private information, and the addition of an untested question on citizenship
42 would preclude achieving a successful Census 2020; and

43 WHEREAS, with vigorous research and testing already completed and a three-month
44 window of time before which the agency must submit its final questions to Congress, now
45 is not the time for our nation to devote precious resources toward this misguided and
46 unnecessary pursuit; and

47 WHEREAS, this body urges the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, to dismiss the
48 Department of Justice's request and to move forward with the questions that have been
49 researched, tested, and approved for Census 2020.

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
51 the members of this body strongly oppose the Department of Justice's request to add a
52 citizenship question to Census 2020.

53 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
54 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
55 public and the press.