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June 29, 2018

Ms. Jennifer Jessup
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
Department of Commerce; Room 6616
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Re: Comments on Proposed Information Collection on 2020 Census, Docket No. USBC-2018-0005

Dear Ms. Jessup,

On behalf of United Neighborhood Houses of New York, a member of New York Counts 2020, I write to offer comments in opposition to the proposed citizenship question on the 2020 Census form. United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), the association of NYC's 39 non-profit settlement houses and neighborhood centers reaching over 750,000 New Yorkers every year, strongly urges the Department of Commerce to remove the citizenship question from the 2020 Census form. It is clear that the sole goal of the inclusion of such a question is to intimidate immigrant communities from participating in our national Census—and the result of an undercount of NYC's residents will hurt all New Yorkers and indeed, all Americans.

Settlement houses are deeply embedded into the communities that they serve. As a result, our network has already been hearing from residents of all citizenship status that they would not feel comfortable answering the citizenship question to the federal government given our current social and political climate. The chilling effect imposed through the addition of a citizenship question could potentially cost New York City and State billions in federal dollars, many of which originated as income taxes paid by New Yorkers of all citizenship statuses. In addition, the possible loss in our State's Congressional representation would be an unjust outcome. In short, deliberately suppressing Census participation will have a detrimental impact on our country's political and economic well-being.

A fair and accurate census is essential for all basic functions of our society. New York can only succeed when all its residents do, and an equitable investment of federal dollars is absolutely paramount to building that success. For this reason the 2020 Census should not include a citizenship question that will undermine a successful count of our nation's people. An overwhelming majority of entities have united in opposition against the citizenship question, including more than 160 Republican and Democratic mayors, six former directors of the Census Bureau and two former Commerce Secretaries from Republican and Democratic administrations, 171 civil and human rights groups, more than 600 faith leaders, more than 120 of members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and many others representing a diversity of political ideologies and communities. All are united in their deep-seated concern that an untested citizenship question will compromise implementation of the 2020 Census and jeopardize the quality and accuracy of census data for all communities.



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We join in calling the Administration to represent the interests of all Americans by focusing its energy on planning an efficient, well-resourced and representative count of our country's vibrant and diverse communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lena Cohen', written in a cursive style.

Lena Cohen
Civic Engagement Associate