



APSA Statement on Reinstating Citizenship Question in 2020 Census

On March 26, 2018, the U.S. Department of Commerce [announced](#) that it will reinstate a question regarding citizenship status in the 2020 census. The census last included a citizenship question in 1950. The American Political Science Association is concerned that this announced change for the 2020 census, which was introduced without following standard practice for public comment and testing new questions, could compromise the response rate and undermine the scientific integrity of the decennial questionnaire. This data—a record of the number of all people in the United States—is of critical importance not only to state, local, and federal government officials and policymakers, but also to researchers across a variety of social and behavioral science disciplines, including political science.

The Census Bureau uses a multi-year process to test new questions for the census. [Former directors](#) of the Bureau noted earlier this year that “adding an untested question on citizenship status at this late point in the decennial planning process would put the accuracy of the enumeration and success of the census in all communities at grave risk.”

The American Political Science Association urges the Department of Commerce to reconsider this decision before submitting to Congress the final questions for the 2020 Census on March 31, 2018. Should the Department include this question in its submission, we encourage Congress to preserve the scientific integrity of the 2020 census through appropriate legislation.

Contact your representatives in Congress using the [Consortium of Social Science Associations' portal](#).