

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

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

Dear Ms. Jessup,

I am writing to ensure that both the spirit and letter of the U.S. Constitution be upheld as related to the Census. In particular, I ask that the question of citizenship be removed.

Blandin Foundation is a private foundation established in 1941 for the betterment of mankind, particularly in a remote part of Northern Minnesota. Today, we work for and invest in vibrant, healthy and resilient rural communities across the state—one of only a handful of private foundations in the United States with a focus exclusively on rural communities.

As a committed and passionate rural advocate, Blandin Foundation depends on good information to make our own investments of grant dollars (about \$12 million per year), our time and our attention. We depend on a full and fair Census count, which is why we have invested both financial and human resources in assisting efforts at the federal, state and local level in preparing for the 2020 Census.

The Census matters greatly to rural peoples. It drives economic investment, apportions our political voice, and informs public investment. Yet rural persons are traditionally undercounted, especially those mistrusting of government or persistently overlooked. In our home county of Itasca, for example, participation rates in the 2010 Census were only 66 percent.

Thousands of people across the country are gearing up for a complete count in 2020. The addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, however, will work against efforts for a full and fair count. I know personally, based on conversations I have had throughout rural Minnesota, that the very persons who are traditionally undercounted will be further driven from participation in the 2020 Census out of fear and mistrust should the proposed citizenship question continue.

It is critical that the United States understand citizenship numbers and patterns. We appreciate the importance of this as well, especially as rural places struggle to maintain their representation in Congress and work to live up to the Voting Rights Act. However, counting citizens through the Census endangers the bigger, and constitutionally mandated, goal of a complete count of those living in our communities.

In short, I write in favor of a Census that provides a full and fair count of America's peoples. This constitutionally mandated goal supersedes other goals, such as citizenship. The citizenship question should not continue as part of the 2020 Census.

With respect,

Dr. Kathleen Annette, president and CEO  
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