



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on July 3, 2019

## Trump Disputes Reports That He Has Given Up Adding Citizenship Question to Census

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Following a ruling by the Supreme Court on June 27 that rejected the Trump administration's stated reason for adding a question on citizenship to the 2020 census, several news outlets reported that the administration has relented and has ordered the Census Bureau to start printing forms for the 2020 census without a question asking about citizenship.



The reported announcement represented a step back from President Trump's statement soon after the Supreme Court's decision that he was asking his lawyers to delay the census, "no matter how long," in order to fight for the question in court.

The change in the administration's position, reported MSN.com, Fox News, and others, came by way of a one-sentence e-mail from the Justice Department to lawyers for the plaintiffs in lawsuit brought by the state of New York in the case that went before the Supreme Court: *United States Department of Commerce v. New York, No. 18-966*.

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However, as we write, Reuters has reported a tweet from Trump contradicting these reports, stating:

The News Reports about the Department of Commerce dropping its quest to put the Citizenship Question on the Census is incorrect or, to state it differently, FAKE! We are absolutely moving forward, as we must, because of the importance of the answer to this question.

Reuters said that White House and Commerce Department officials had no immediate comment on Trump's tweet.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which had challenged the citizenship question in court, did have something to say on Twitter: "There's nothing fake about the Department of Justice writing us saying printing is starting without the citizenship question."

Fox News reported that the New York attorney general's office said on July 2 that the Justice Department has decided to print the 2020 Census without the citizenship question that had been sought by the Trump administration.

In a statement to Fox News, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross tied the decision to the Supreme Court's ruling. "I respect the Supreme Court but strongly disagree with its ruling regarding my decision to reinstate a citizenship question on the 2020 Census," Ross said. "The Census Bureau has started the



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process of printing the decennial questionnaires without the question. My focus, and that of the Bureau and the entire Department is to conduct a complete and accurate census.”

In ruling on the case, the Supreme Court did not prohibit a citizenship question *per se*, but rejected the rationale the administration provided for including the question as insufficient.

Chief Justice Roberts, writing for the majority, said the administration’s explanation for adding the citizen question to the census form “seems to have been contrived.” However, he left open the possibility that the administration could provide a sufficient explanation in the future.

Executive branch officials must “offer genuine justifications for important decisions, reasons that can be scrutinized by courts and the interested public,” Roberts wrote.

However this dispute plays out, the time for printing the 2020 census forms is running short so it must be settled quickly.

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*Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at [wmass@thenewamerican.com](mailto:wmass@thenewamerican.com).*



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