

Resolution
by the Mexican American School Boards Association
on Proposed Questions for the 2020 U.S. Census

WHEREAS the United States of America has long believed in the importance of collecting accurate data on our nation's population, including accurate data on the racial, ethnic and national origin groups of all who reside in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS census data guide a wide range of decisions made in the public and private sectors, including the allocation of billions of dollars in federal, state and local funding, that affect the lives of American families and their children; and

WHEREAS census data help ensure fair and representative reapportionment and redistricting, and play an indispensable role in the monitoring and implementation of civil rights policies; and

WHEREAS Latinos are the nation's second-largest subpopulation, numbering more than 53 million individuals, and are one of the nation's fastest growing communities, accounting for more than one of every six U.S. residents, and one of every four U.S. residents under the age of 18; and

WHEREAS a full and accurate count of the Latino community is necessary to compile the most accurate census data possible about the U.S. population; and

WHEREAS U.S. Census data on race and ethnicity serve two crucial purposes that are particularly important for the Latino community, including the revelation of persistent disparities rooted in historic discrimination premised on race and ethnicity, and the enabling of efforts to eliminate those disparities; and

WHEREAS beginning in 1970, the U.S. Census included separate questions on Hispanic identity and racial identity in its questionnaires; and

WHEREAS research in the 1990's showed that the government derived much better data with two separate questions on racial identity, than a combined question; and

WHEREAS the Office of Management and Budget undertook a major revision in 1997 of its classification standards, and adopted an approach which defined two ethnicity categories, Latino or not Latino, which were distinct from the race categories of White, Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Census Bureau has consistently found that Latinos account for the majority of people who do not report themselves as belonging to any of the specific race category, including the fact that in the 2010 U.S. Census 43% of Latinos did not answer the race question or chose "Some other race," which suggests that they did not identify with the specific racial groups set forth in the question; and

WHEREAS 97% of the 19.1 million individuals who identified themselves in the 2010 U.S. Census as "Some other race" were Latino; and

WHEREAS Latinos aged 18 to 44 are statistically more likely than their older counterparts to answer "Some other race" or to provide no answer to a separate Census question about race; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Census Bureau expects that by 2020, “Some other race” could become the second-largest racial group reported in the U.S. Census; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010 research on the Hispanic origin and race questions found that significant numbers of Latinos did not embrace or express any identity other than that stemming from their Latino and specific national origin heritage, and that many survey participants were skeptical or suspicious of the motives for asking a separate question that sought only to identify people with Latino ethnicity, perhaps with the worry that the question enabled the discriminatory treatment of people who denoted themselves as Hispanic or Latino; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Census Bureau has confirmed that a combined question, rather than separate race and ethnicity questions, with a “Latino/Hispanic” category resulted in lower nonresponse rates regardless of the medium used to answer the questionnaire, or whether respondents used English- or Spanish-language questionnaires; and

WHEREAS it must be recognized that concerns remain about a combined question approach, which must be resolved; and

WHEREAS the Office of Management and Budget has now finalized its standards and the U.S. Census Bureau has recently submitted to Congress its proposed final wording of questions for the 2020 U.S. Census, which proposes no changes from the 2010 U.S. Census with respect to questions on race and ethnicity; and

WHEREAS the addition of a question on citizenship is now proposed for the 2020 U.S. Census by the Administration of President Donald J. Trump and U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross; and

WHEREAS the possibility of the addition of a last-minute and untested citizenship question in the 2020 U.S. Census now threatens a full and accurate count of the Latino community and of the nation, costing taxpayers more than \$55 million for each one-percent decrease in self-response rate; and

WHEREAS field surveys report widespread and unprecedented fear and distrust among test respondents for a possible question on citizenship in the 2020 U.S. Census; and

WHEREAS the possibility of a question on citizenship in the 2020 U.S. Census now undermines the integrity of one of the most preeminent scientific agencies in the world; and

WHEREAS a citizenship question in the 2020 U.S. Census has been opposed to date by innumerable persons and organizations, including the American Sociological Association, six former U.S. Census Bureau Directors from both Republican and Democratic administrations, more than 161 U.S. mayors, 19 state attorneys general, and numerous leaders in the business community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American School Boards Association supports all efforts to collect accurate U.S. Census data on our nation’s population and on the Latino community of the United States, particularly for the many benefits that accrue from the collection of such accurate data to the Latino students and English Language Learners of our U.S. public schools, and to their families; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American School Boards Association supports all efforts that will help ensure a full and accurate count of the Latino community in the 2020 U.S.

Census, and opposes all efforts that will impede or inhibit a full and accurate count of the Latino community in the 2020 U.S. Census; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American School Boards Association mourns the fact that Latinos residing in the U.S. will continue to not identify with the specific racial groups set forth in proposed questions on race in the 2020 U.S. Census and, as a consequence, will likely continue to not respond to the question of race in large numbers and/or to identify themselves as “Some other race”; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American School Boards Association further mourns the fact that Latinos residing in the U.S. will likely continue to be skeptical or suspicious of the 2020 U.S. Census and/or will continue to fear the possibility of discriminatory treatment and/or other consequences toward those who self-identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino and/or as not being a citizen of the United States; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American School Boards Association opposes any proposed question in the 2020 U.S. Census that seeks to ascertain an individual’s citizenship status; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American School Boards Association calls upon all persons in positions of political power to recognize these causes for concern and to advocate for continued reform of the questions proposed for the 2020 U.S. Census, particularly for the omission of any question related to citizenship status; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American School Boards Association calls upon all persons of good will to advocate for this very important and urgent issue, which so poignantly impacts the lives and well-being of our Latino students and English Language Learners ,and their families.

Passed this 18th day of April, 2018.

Homero Garcia, President

Willie Tenorio, Jr., Acting Secretary