



May 20, 2019

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your May 8, 2019, letter suggesting we meet to discuss the Department's cooperation regarding the Committee's investigation into the reinstatement of the citizenship question in the 2020 Census. I appreciated the opportunity to testify before the Committee at length about this issue in March, and I am grateful to you for your courtesy during that process.

As an initial matter, let me assure you that the Department's staff has kept me fully apprised of the Department's cooperation with the Committee's work, as well as our outstanding areas of disagreement. I understand the Department has already produced more than 13,200 pages of documents and intends to produce additional documents no later than June 3, 2019. The Department is actively engaging with your staff to reach an agreed-upon accommodation for additional material the Committee seeks.

The Department has for months accommodated the Committee's desire for information. As you are aware, however, the Committee's latest requests seek information that implicate Executive Branch confidentiality interests, including material protected by the deliberative process and attorney-client privileges, among others.

In order to properly weigh whether the Department can make privileged material available to the Committee, the Department must better understand the Committee's particularized legislative need for each sensitive portion of the information. The Department has asked for that explanation as the appropriate next step in our discussions on no fewer than three occasions.<sup>1</sup>

I am pleased about the Committee's interest in the 2020 Census. We must all work together to ensure its success. As we have always demonstrated, the Department stands ready to work with the Committee to find an accommodation that works for all parties. If you have any additional questions, please contact Charles Kolo Rathburn at (202) 482-3663.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Ross Branson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Dep't of Commerce, to Elijah E. Cummings, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Reform (Mar. 26, 2019); Letter from Michael Platt Jr., Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Dep't of Commerce, to Elijah E. Cummings, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Reform (Apr. 1, 2019); Email from Ross Branson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Dep't of Commerce, to Staff of House Committee on Oversight and Reform (Apr. 17, 2019).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wilbur Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "W" and a long, sweeping "R".

Wilbur Ross

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Ranking Member