May 31, 2019

The Honorable Peggy E. Gustafson  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20230-0001

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Inspectors General Gustafson and Horowitz:

We write to urge you to review the actions taken by both the Departments of Justice and Commerce to hide the contribution of a deeply partisan political operative in the addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, as reported in the press.¹ Specifically, we urge you to review the following:

(a) In depositions and congressional interviews, Justice and Commerce Department officials failed to disclose the substantive public policy role of a political operative, Dr. Thomas Hofeller, in adding the citizenship question to the 2020 Census; and

(b) In concealing the contribution of Dr. Hofeller, Justice and Commerce Department officials purposely obscured the impermissible racial and partisan motivations for adding a citizenship question—to be “advantageous to Republicans and Non-Hispanic Whites” and to “clearly be a disadvantage to the Democrats”—in both the Justice Department’s December 2017 letter requesting the citizenship question and the Commerce Department’s March 2018 memorandum adding the question.²³

Taken together this new evidence not only contradicts Secretary Ross’s assertion that the addition of the citizenship question would assist in Voting Rights Act enforcement, but also implicates officials in the Justice and Commerce Departments in an effort to hide from the Congress and the public the true rationale for this question. This reported misconduct warrants an immediate review by your offices.

We appreciate your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

BRIAN SCHATZ  
United States Senator

CHARLES E. SCHUMER  
United States Senator
CORY A. BOOKER  
United States Senator

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senator

PATTY MURRAY  
United States Senator

ELIZABETH WARREN  
United States Senator

MICHAEL F. BENNET  
United States Senator

JACK REED  
United States Senator

RON WYDEN  
United States Senator

TAMMY DUCKWORTH  
United States Senator

AMY KLOBUCHAR  
United States Senator

KAMALA D. HARRIS  
United States Senator

KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND  
United States Senator

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