

No. 18A-\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

---

IN RE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ET AL.

---

APPLICATION FOR A STAY PENDING DISPOSITION  
OF A PETITION FOR A WRIT OF MANDAMUS  
TO THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK  
AND REQUEST FOR AN IMMEDIATE ADMINISTRATIVE STAY

---

NOEL J. FRANCISCO  
Solicitor General  
Counsel of Record  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001  
SupremeCtBriefs@usdoj.gov  
(202) 514-2217

---

---

#### PARTIES TO THE PROCEEDING

Applicants (defendants in the district court, and mandamus petitioners in the court of appeals) are the United States Department of Commerce; Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., in his official capacity as Secretary of Commerce; the United States Census Bureau, an agency within the United States Department of Commerce; and Ron S. Jarmin, in his capacity performing the non-exclusive functions and duties of the Director of the United States Census Bureau (referred to as the "Acting Director" in this brief).

Respondent in this Court is the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Respondents also include the State of New York; the State of Connecticut; the State of Delaware; the District of Columbia; the State of Illinois; the State of Iowa; the State of Maryland; the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the State of Minnesota; the State of New Jersey; the State of New Mexico; the State of North Carolina; the State of Oregon; the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; the State of Rhode Island; the Commonwealth of Virginia; the State of Vermont; the State of Washington; the City of Chicago, Illinois; the City of New York; the City of Philadelphia; the City of Providence; the City and County of San Francisco, California; the United States Conference of Mayors; the City of Seattle, Washington; the City of Pittsburgh; the County of Cameron; the State of Colorado; the City of Central Falls; the City of Columbus; the County of El Paso; the County of Monterey; and the County of Hidalgo (collectively

plaintiffs in the district court in No. 18-cv-2921, and real parties in interest in the court of appeals in Nos. 18-2652 and 18-2856). Respondents further include the New York Immigration Coalition; Casa de Maryland, Inc.; the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee; ADC Research Institute; and Make the Road New York (collectively plaintiffs in the district court in No. 18-cv-5025, and real parties in interest in the court of appeals in Nos. 18-2659 and 18-2857).

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

---

No. 18A-\_\_\_\_\_

IN RE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ET AL.

---

APPLICATION FOR A STAY PENDING DISPOSITION  
OF A PETITION FOR A WRIT OF MANDAMUS  
TO THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK  
AND REQUEST FOR AN IMMEDIATE ADMINISTRATIVE STAY

---

Pursuant to Rule 23 of the Rules of this Court and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. 1651, the Solicitor General, on behalf of the United States Department of Commerce, the Secretary of Commerce, the United States Census Bureau, and the Acting Director of the United States Census Bureau, respectfully applies for a stay of written orders and an oral ruling entered by the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York on September 21, 2018 (App., infra, 5a-16a), August 17, 2018 (id. at 17a-19a), and July 3, 2018 (id. at 95a-107a). Together, these orders specifically compel the depositions of two high-ranking Executive Branch officials -- the Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., and the Acting Assistant Attorney General (AAG) of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, John M. Gore -- and more generally expand discovery beyond the administrative record in this suit under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. 701 et seq.

This application arises from a pair of consolidated cases challenging the decision by Secretary Ross to reinstate a citizenship question on the decennial census. Questions seeking citizenship or birthplace information were part of every decennial census from 1820 to 1950 (except in 1840); and from 1960 through 2000 the decennial census continued to elicit such information from a sample of the population. Since 2005, the Census Bureau has included questions about citizenship and birthplace in detailed annual surveys sent to samples of the population. Respondents here challenge Secretary Ross's decision to reinstate a citizenship question on the 2020 decennial census, alleging that adding the question might cause an undercount because, among other things, some households containing individuals who are unlawfully present will be deterred from responding (despite their legal duty to respond). Therefore, respondents claim, the Secretary's decision was arbitrary and capricious, and violates various regulatory, statutory, and constitutional provisions.

The immediate dispute here is about whether respondents are entitled to probe Secretary Ross's mental state -- his subjective motivations -- when he decided to reinstate the citizenship question. Secretary Ross consulted with many parties, including Census Bureau, Commerce Department, and Justice Department officials, before announcing his decision, and he set forth his reasons in a detailed memorandum backed by a voluminous

administrative record. See App., infra, 117a-124a. Those reasons include the Justice Department's view that citizenship data from the decennial census would be helpful to its enforcement duties under the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), 52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq. App., infra, 125a-127a. Not content to evaluate the legality of the Secretary's order based on the administrative record, respondents assert that Secretary Ross's stated reasons are pretextual, and that his decision was driven by secret motives, including animus against racial minorities. They seek -- and the district court agreed to compel -- wide-ranging discovery to probe the Secretary's mental state, including by deposing him and other high-ranking government officials.

This Court has long recognized that an agency decisionmaker's mental state is generally irrelevant to evaluating the legality of agency action. See Morgan v. United States, 304 U.S. 1, 18 (1938). So too has this Court recognized that compelling the testimony of a high-ranking government official -- especially a member of the President's Cabinet -- is rarely if ever justified. See United States v. Morgan, 313 U.S. 409, 422 (1941). Secretary Ross set forth the reasons supporting his decision to reinstate a citizenship question in a detailed memorandum, and the government has provided an extensive administrative record in support of that determination. The validity of the Secretary's decision is properly judged on that objective "administrative record already

in existence, not some new record made initially in the reviewing court." Camp v. Pitts, 411 U.S. 138, 142 (1973) (per curiam).

The district court nevertheless concluded that compelling a Cabinet Secretary's and Acting AAG's testimony was justified because respondents made a "strong showing of bad faith" on the part of Secretary Ross. App., infra, 13a (citation omitted). Yet the district court's stated reasons -- that Secretary Ross might have subjectively desired to reinstate the question before soliciting the views of the Justice Department; that he overruled subordinates who opposed reintroducing the citizenship question; that the citizenship question was not "well tested"; and that the Justice Department had not previously requested citizenship data for its VRA enforcement duties -- all are legally immaterial, and some are factually incorrect as well.

Nor does the district court's finding that "exceptional circumstances" warrant Secretary Ross's deposition survive scrutiny. App., infra, 12a. The court thought Secretary Ross's testimony uniquely vital because he was personally involved in the decision to reinstate a citizenship question and the decision is of great importance to the public. The Secretary's personal involvement in a significant policy decision is not exceptional, and the importance of the Secretary's decision in this case does not distinguish it from many other decisions of national importance that Cabinet Secretaries make.

Compounding its error, the district court did not adequately consider whether the information respondents hope to obtain from Secretary Ross could be obtained elsewhere. Respondents already have received extensive materials through discovery, including documents and testimony from the Secretary's closest aides. And Secretary Ross's testimony, much of which likely will be privileged, is unlikely to add anything material to respondents' understanding of those events. Moreover, to the extent extra-record discovery is appropriate, the government offered to supply the information respondents seek from Secretary Ross through interrogatories, requests for admission, or a deposition of the Commerce Department under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(b)(6). See App., infra, 13a. At a minimum, the court should have ordered the parties to undertake these alternatives before it took the extraordinary and disfavored step of ordering a Cabinet Secretary's deposition.

Similar infirmities beset the district court's order compelling Acting AAG Gore's deposition. Neither respondents nor the district court explained how Acting AAG Gore could provide information about Secretary Ross's mental state or alleged hidden animus. And of course Acting AAG Gore's testimony on these topics would likely be privileged as well.

The standards for granting a stay are thus readily met in this case. The district court's orders mandating discovery outside



the administrative record, including by compelling the depositions of Secretary Ross and Acting AAG Gore, were in excess of the court's authority under the APA and violate fundamental principles of administrative law. As with similar administrative-record-related orders this Court has recently considered, the orders here "constitute[] 'a clear abuse of discretion'" and present a "classic case [for] mandamus relief." In re United States, 875 F.3d 1200, 1211, 1213 (9th Cir.) (Watford, J., dissenting) (citation omitted), vacated and remanded, 138 S. Ct. 443 (2017) (per curiam).

The balance of harms weighs strongly in favor of an immediate stay. Respondents have stated their intent to depose Acting AAG Gore and Secretary Ross on October 10 and 11, respectively. Absent a stay, these high-level Executive Branch officials will be forced to prepare for and attend these depositions, and those harms cannot be undone by an eventual victory on the merits. By contrast, respondents have no pressing need to depose these officials immediately. To be sure, the district court has set a trial date of November 5, and the government also desires an expeditious resolution of the ultimate legality of Secretary Ross's order in time to finalize the 2020 decennial census questionnaire. But inquiry into Secretary Ross's mental state -- or, for that matter, a trial -- is unnecessary to resolve that question under bedrock principles of administrative law. Rather, the district court must decide this challenge on "the administrative record

already in existence, not some new record made initially in the reviewing court.” Camp v. Pitts, 411 U.S. 138, 142 (1973) (per curiam).

In light of the looming depositions and the government’s clear right to relief, the government seeks an immediate stay of all three orders pending completion of all further proceedings in this Court. The Second Circuit already has denied mandamus relief to quash Acting AAG Gore’s deposition and to halt further discovery, and on October 2 denied the government’s request to stay those orders. App., infra, 3a-4a, 129a. The Second Circuit has temporarily stayed Secretary Ross’s deposition until at least October 9, when it will consider the government’s mandamus petition to quash that deposition. Id. at 1a-2a. If the Second Circuit denies mandamus relief and lifts the stay on or after that date, however, it would leave little or no time for the parties and this Court to act before Secretary Ross’s October 11 deposition. To avoid a needlessly rushed schedule, the government in this application seeks a stay of Secretary Ross’s deposition as well.

After the Second Circuit resolves the dispute over Secretary Ross’s deposition, the government intends to file a petition for a writ of mandamus or certiorari in this Court. The forthcoming petition will challenge, at a minimum, the orders compelling Acting AAG Gore’s deposition and the extra-record discovery into Secretary Ross’s mental state; and if the Second Circuit ultimately

declines to quash the order compelling Secretary Ross's deposition, the government's forthcoming petition will challenge that order too.

In the alternative, the Court could construe this application either as a petition for a writ of mandamus to the district court or as a petition for a writ of certiorari to the Second Circuit. (In the case of Secretary Ross's deposition, which the Second Circuit will consider on October 9, the Court could construe this application as a petition for a writ of mandamus or certiorari before judgment.) Either way, the government respectfully requests an immediate administrative stay of all three discovery orders while the Court considers this application.

#### STATEMENT

1. The Constitution requires that an "actual Enumeration" of the population be conducted every ten years in order to allocate representatives in Congress among the States, and vests Congress with the authority to conduct that census "in such Manner as they shall by Law direct." U.S. Const. Art. I § 2, Cl. 3. The Census Act, 13 U.S.C. 1 et seq., delegates to the Secretary of Commerce the responsibility to conduct the decennial census "in such form and content as he may determine," and "authorize[s] [him] to obtain such other census information as necessary." 13 U.S.C. 141(a). The Census Bureau assists the Secretary in the performance of this responsibility. See 13 U.S.C. 2, 4. The Act directs that the

Secretary "shall prepare questionnaires, and shall determine the inquiries, and the number, form, and subdivisions thereof, for the statistics, surveys, and censuses provided for in this title." 13 U.S.C. 5. Nothing in the Act directs the content of the questions that are to be included on the decennial census.

2. With the exception of 1840, decennial censuses from 1820 to 1880 asked for citizenship or birthplace in some form, and decennial censuses from 1890 through 1950 specifically requested citizenship information. 18-cv-2921 Docket entry No. 215, at 8-10 (S.D.N.Y. July 26, 2018) (MTD Order).

Citizenship-related questions continued to be asked of some respondents after the 1950 Census. In 1960, the Census Bureau asked 25% of the population for the respondent's birthplace and that of his or her parents. Id. at 10-11. Between 1970 and 2000, the Census Bureau distributed a detailed questionnaire, known as the "long-form questionnaire," to a sample of the population (one in five households in 1970, one in six thereafter) in lieu of the "short-form questionnaire" sent to the majority of households. Id. at 11-12. The long-form questionnaire included questions about the respondent's citizenship or birthplace, while the short form did not. Ibid.

Beginning in 2005, the Census Bureau began collecting the more extensive long-form data -- including citizenship data -- through the American Community Survey (ACS), which is sent yearly

to about one in 38 households. Ibid. The replacement of the long-form questionnaire with the yearly ACS enabled the 2010 census to be a "short-form-only" census. The 2020 census will also be a "short-form-only" census. The ACS will continue to be distributed each year, as usual, to collect additional data, and will continue to include a citizenship question.

Because the ACS collects information from only a small sample of the population, it produces annual estimates only for "census tracts" and "census-block groups." The decennial census attempts a full count of the people in each State and produces population counts as well as counts of other, limited information down to the smallest geographic level, known as the "census block." As in past years, the 2020 census questionnaire will pose a number of questions beyond the total number of individuals residing at a location, including questions regarding sex, Hispanic origin, race, and relationship status.

3. On March 26, 2018, the Secretary of Commerce issued a memorandum reinstating a citizenship question on the 2020 Census questionnaire. App., infra, 117a-124a. The Secretary's reasoning and the procedural background are set out in that memorandum and in a supplemental memorandum issued on June 21, 2018. See id. at 116a. The Secretary explained that, "[s]oon after [his] appointment," he "began considering various fundamental issues" regarding the 2020 Census, including whether to reinstate a

citizenship question. Ibid. As part of the Secretary's deliberative process, he and his staff "consulted with Federal governmental components and inquired whether the Department of Justice (DOJ) would support, and if so would request, inclusion of a citizenship question as consistent with and useful for the enforcement of [the] Voting Rights Act." Ibid.

In a December 12, 2017 letter (Gary Letter), DOJ responded that citizenship data is important to the Department's enforcement of Section 2 of the VRA for several reasons, including that the decennial census questionnaire would provide more granular citizenship voting age population (CVAP) data than the ACS surveys can. App., infra, at 125a-127a. Accordingly, DOJ "formally request[ed] that the Census Bureau reinstate into the 2020 Census a question regarding citizenship." Id. at 127a.

After receiving DOJ's formal request, the Secretary "initiated a comprehensive review process led by the Census Bureau," App., infra, 117a, and asked the Census Bureau to evaluate the best means of providing the data identified in the letter. The Census Bureau initially presented three alternatives. Id. at 118a-120a. After reviewing those alternatives, the Secretary asked the Census Bureau to consider a fourth option too. Id. at 120a. Ultimately, the Secretary concluded that this fourth option, reinstating a citizenship question on the decennial census, would

provide DOJ with the most complete and accurate CVAP data. Id. at 121a.

The Secretary also observed that collecting citizenship data in the decennial census has a long history and that the ACS has included a citizenship question since 2005. App., infra, 118a. The Secretary therefore found, and the Census Bureau confirmed, that "the citizenship question has been well tested." Ibid. He further confirmed with the Census Bureau that census-block-level citizenship data are not available from the ACS. Ibid.

The Secretary considered but rejected concerns that reinstating a citizenship question would negatively impact the response rate for non-citizens. App., infra, 119a-122a. While the Secretary agreed that a "significantly lower response rate by non-citizens could reduce the accuracy of the decennial census and increase costs for non-response follow up \* \* \* operations," he concluded that "neither the Census Bureau nor the concerned stakeholders could document that the response rate would in fact decline materially" as a result of reinstatement of a citizenship question. Id. at 119a. Based on his discussions with outside parties, Census Bureau leadership, and others within the Commerce Department, the Secretary determined that, to the best of everyone's knowledge, there is limited empirical data on how reinstating a citizenship question might affect response rates. Id. at 119a, 121a.

The Secretary also emphasized that “[c]ompleting and returning decennial census questionnaires is required by Federal law,” meaning that concerns regarding a reduction in response rates were premised on speculation that some will “violat[e] [a] legal duty to respond.” App., infra, 123a. So despite the hypothesis “that adding a citizenship question could reduce response rates, the Census Bureau’s analysis did not provide definitive, empirical support for that belief.” Id. at 120a. The Secretary further explained that the Census Bureau intends to take steps to conduct respondent and stakeholder outreach in an effort to mitigate any impact on response rates of including a citizenship question. Id. at 121a. In light of these considerations, the Secretary concluded that “even if there is some impact on responses, the value of more complete and accurate [citizenship] data derived from surveying the entire population outweighs such concerns.” Id. at 123a.

4. Plaintiffs below (respondents in this Court) are governmental entities (including States, cities, and counties) and non-profit organizations. The operative complaints allege that the Secretary’s action violates the Enumeration Clause; is arbitrary and capricious under the Administrative Procedure Act; and denies equal protection by discriminating against racial minorities. See 18-cv-5025 Compl. ¶¶ 193-212 (S.D.N.Y. June 6, 2018); 18-cv-2921 Second Am. Compl. ¶¶ 178-197 (S.D.N.Y. July 25,



2018).<sup>1</sup> All of the claims rest on the speculative premise that reinstating a citizenship question will reduce the self-response rate to the census because, notwithstanding the legal duty to answer the census, 13 U.S.C. 221, some households containing at least one noncitizen may be deterred from doing so (and those households will disproportionately contain racial minorities). Respondents maintain that Secretary Ross's stated reasons in his memorandum are pretextual, and that his decision was driven by secret reasons, including animus against minorities.

Respondents announced their intention to seek extra-record discovery before the administrative record had been filed. At a May 9, 2018 hearing, respondents asserted that "an exploration of the decision-makers' mental state" was necessary and that extra-record discovery on that issue, including deposition discovery, was thus justified, "prefatory to" the government's production of the administrative record. 18-cv-2921 Docket entry No. 150, at 9.

5. At a July 3 hearing, the district court granted respondents' request for extra-record discovery over the government's strong objections. App., infra, 95a-104a. The court

---

<sup>1</sup> Challenges to the Secretary's decision have also been brought in district courts in Maryland and California. See Kravitz v. United States Dep't of Commerce, No. 18-cv-1041-GJH (D. Md. filed Apr. 11, 2018); La Union del Pueblo Entero v. Ross, No. 18-cv-1570 (D. Md. filed May 31, 2018); California v. Ross, No. 18-cv-1865 (N.D. Cal. filed Mar. 26, 2018); City of San Jose v. Ross, No. 18-cv-2279 (N.D. Cal. filed Mar. 17, 2018).

concluded that respondents had made a sufficiently strong showing of bad faith to warrant extra-record discovery. Id. at 101a. The court offered four reasons to support this determination. First, the Secretary's supplemental memorandum "could be read to suggest that the Secretary had already decided to add the citizenship question before he reached out to the Justice Department; that is, that the decision preceded the stated rationale." Ibid. Second, the record submitted by the Department "reveals that Secretary Ross overruled senior Census Bureau career staff," who recommended against adding a question. Ibid. Third, the Secretary used an abbreviated decisionmaking process in deciding to reinstate a citizenship question, as compared to other instances in which questions had been added to the census. Id. at 102a. Fourth, respondents had made "a prima facie showing" that the Secretary's stated justification for reinstating a citizenship question -- that it would aid DOJ in enforcing the VRA -- was "pretextual" because DOJ had not previously suggested that citizenship data collected through the decennial census was needed to enforce the VRA. Id. at 102a-103a.

Following that order, the government supplemented the administrative record with over 12,000 pages of documents, including materials reviewed and created by direct advisors to the Secretary. The government also produced additional documents in response to discovery requests, including nearly 11,000 pages from

the Department of Commerce and over 14,000 pages from DOJ. Respondents have also deposed several senior Census Bureau and Commerce Department officials, including the Acting Director of the Census Bureau and the Chief of Staff to the Secretary. Although the government strongly objected to the bad-faith finding and subsequent discovery, it initially chose to comply rather than seek the extraordinary relief of mandamus.

6. On July 26, the district court granted the government's motion to dismiss respondents' Enumeration Clause claims. See MTD Order. The district court denied the motion to dismiss respondents' APA and equal protection claims, concluding that respondents had alleged sufficient facts to demonstrate standing at the motion to dismiss stage, id. at 16-32; that respondents' claims were not barred by the political question doctrine, id. at 32-37; that the conduct of the census was not committed to the Secretary's discretion by law, id. at 38-45; and that respondents' allegations, accepted as true, stated a plausible claim of intentional discrimination, id. at 60-68.

7. On August 17, the district court entered an order compelling the deposition testimony of the Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, John M. Gore. App., infra, 17a-19a. The court concluded that Acting AAG Gore's testimony was "plainly 'relevant'" to respondents' case in light of his "apparent role" in drafting the

Gary Letter, and concluded that he “possesses relevant information that cannot be obtained from another source.” Id. at 18a. On August 31, the government moved to stay discovery, including Acting AAG Gore’s deposition, pending a mandamus petition in the Second Circuit. 18-cv-2921 Docket entry No. 292. On September 4, the district court denied an administrative stay, and three days later denied a stay altogether. 18-cv-2921 Docket entry Nos. 297, 308.

On September 7, the government filed a petition for a writ of mandamus (and request for an interim stay) with the Second Circuit, asking to quash Acting AAG Gore’s deposition. See 18-2652 Pet. for Writ of Mandamus. The government also sought to halt further extra-record discovery because that discovery also was based on the same erroneous bad-faith finding. On September 25, the court of appeals denied the petition, explaining that it could not “say that the district court clearly abused its discretion in concluding that respondents made a sufficient showing of ‘bad faith or improper behavior’ to warrant limited extra-record discovery.” App., infra, 4a. The Second Circuit also found no clear abuse of discretion in the district court’s determination that Acting AAG Gore’s deposition was warranted because he possessed unique information “related to plaintiffs’ allegations that the Secretary used the December 2017 Department of Justice letter as a pretextual legal justification for adding the citizenship question.” Ibid.

8. Meanwhile, respondents moved for an order compelling the deposition of Secretary Ross, and, on September 21, the district court entered an order compelling the deposition and denying a stay pending mandamus. App., infra, 5a-16a. The court recognized that court-ordered depositions of high-ranking government officials are highly disfavored, but nonetheless concluded that "exceptional circumstances" existed that "compel[led] the conclusion that a deposition of Secretary Ross is appropriate." Id. at 6a. The court reasoned that exceptional circumstances were present because, in the court's view, "the intent and credibility of Secretary Ross" were "central" to respondents' claims, and Secretary Ross has "'unique first-hand knowledge'" about his reasons for reinstating a citizenship question that cannot "'be obtained through other, less burdensome or intrusive means.'" Id. at 10a-12a (citation omitted).

In concluding that Secretary Ross's deposition was necessary, the district court rejected the government's contention that the information respondents sought could be obtained from other sources, including a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition, interrogatories, or requests for admission. App., infra, 13a. The court found these alternatives unacceptable because they would not allow respondents to assess Secretary Ross's credibility or to ask him follow-up questions. Ibid. The court also believed that a deposition would be a more efficient use of the Secretary's time, because additional

interrogatories, depositions, or requests for admissions would also burden the Secretary. Ibid.

On September 27, the government filed a petition for writ of mandamus (and request for an interim stay) with the Second Circuit, asking to quash Secretary Ross's deposition. See 18-2856 Pet. for Writ of Mandamus. The government also sought a stay to preclude the depositions of Secretary Ross and Acting AAG Gore and to preclude further extra-record discovery pending this Court's review. On September 28, the Second Circuit temporarily stayed Secretary Ross's deposition until at least October 9, when it will consider the mandamus petition. App., infra, 2a. On October 2, the Second Circuit declined to stay Acting AAG Gore's deposition or other discovery. Id. at 129a.

9. Although the district court had denied the government's earlier stay request, the government once again moved for a stay pending review in this Court, in an abundance of caution under this Court's Rule 23.3. The court denied that motion on September 30, and reconfirmed a trial date of November 5, 2018.

#### ARGUMENT

The government respectfully requests that this Court grant a stay of the district court's orders pending completion of further proceedings in this Court. The government intends to file a petition for a writ of mandamus or certiorari challenging all three orders once the Second Circuit resolves the dispute over Secretary

Ross's deposition. In the alternative, the government asks that this application be construed as a petition for a writ of mandamus (or, in the alternative, certiorari) to direct the district court to quash the depositions of Secretary Ross and Acting AAG Gore and to halt discovery beyond the administrative record. The district court should be directed to confine its review of Secretary Ross's decision to the administrative record. The government also requests an immediate administrative stay, including of the order compelling Secretary Ross's deposition, while the Court considers this application.<sup>2</sup>

A stay pending the disposition of a petition for a writ of mandamus is warranted if there is (1) "a fair prospect that a majority of the Court will vote to grant mandamus" and (2) "a likelihood that irreparable harm will result from the denial of a stay." Hollingsworth v. Perry, 558 U.S. 183, 190 (2010) (per curiam). A stay pending the disposition of a petition for a writ of certiorari is appropriate if there is (1) "a reasonable probability that four Justices will consider the issue sufficiently meritorious to grant certiorari"; (2) "a fair prospect that a majority of the Court will conclude that the

---

<sup>2</sup> Under this Court's Rule 23 and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. 1651, a single Justice or the Court has authority to enter a stay pending proceedings in a court of appeals. See, e.g., Trump v. International Refugee Assistance Project, 138 S. Ct. 542 (2017); West Virginia v. EPA, 136 S. Ct. 1000 (2016); Stephen M. Shapiro et al., Supreme Court Practice § 17.6, at 881-884 (10th ed. 2013).

decision below was erroneous"; and (3) "a likelihood that irreparable harm will result from the denial of a stay." Conkright v. Frommert, 556 U.S. 1401, 1402 (2009) (Ginsburg, J., in chambers) (citation, brackets, and internal quotation marks omitted). All of these requirements are met here.

I. THERE IS A REASONABLE PROBABILITY THAT THIS COURT WOULD GRANT CERTIORARI

As explained more fully below, the district court's orders allow respondents to go beyond the administrative record to probe the Secretary's mental state in this APA challenge, contrary to this Court's precedents and bedrock principles of judicial review of agency action. The court's orders compelling the deposition of a Cabinet Secretary and an Assistant Attorney General also raise serious separation-of-powers issues. The court thus resolved "important federal question[s] in a way that conflicts with relevant decisions of this Court," Sup. Ct. R. 10(c), and "has so far departed from the accepted and usual course of judicial proceedings \* \* \* to call for an exercise of this Court's supervisory power," Sup. Ct. R. 10(a). This Court recently granted certiorari in similar circumstances. See, e.g., In re United States, 138 S. Ct. 443, 445 (2017) (per curiam) (granting certiorari and vacating the court of appeals' judgment denying mandamus relief to halt discovery to supplement the administrative record). The issue here is all the more pressing because it implicates foundational tenets of separation of powers.



II. THERE IS A FAIR PROSPECT THAT THE COURT WOULD GRANT MANDAMUS RELIEF DIRECTLY OR REVERSE THE LOWER COURT'S JUDGMENT DENYING MANDAMUS RELIEF

The traditional use of mandamus has been "to confine the court against which mandamus is sought to a lawful exercise of its prescribed jurisdiction." Cheney v. United States Dist. Court, 542 U.S. 367, 380 (2004) (brackets and citation omitted). Moreover, mandamus may also be justified by errors "amounting to a judicial 'usurpation of power'" or a "clear abuse of discretion." Ibid. (citation omitted). A court may issue a writ of mandamus when (1) the petitioner's "right to issuance of the writ is 'clear and indisputable'"; (2) "no other adequate means [exist] to attain the relief he desires"; and (3) "the writ is appropriate under the circumstances." Perry, 558 U.S. at 190 (quoting Cheney, 542 U.S. at 380-381) (brackets in original). Each of those prerequisites for mandamus relief is met here.

A. The Government's Right To Mandamus Relief Is Clear And Indisputable

1. The district court erred at the threshold by allowing discovery beyond the administrative record to probe the Secretary's mental state. "This Court has recognized, ever since Fletcher v. Peck, 6 Cranch 87, 130-131 (1810), that judicial inquiries into legislative or executive motivation represent a substantial intrusion into the workings of other branches of government." Village of Arlington Heights v. Metropolitan Hous. Dev. Corp., 429 U.S. 252, 268 n.18 (1977). In part for that

reason, "[t]he APA specifically contemplates judicial review" only on the basis of "the record the agency presents to the reviewing court." Florida Power & Light Co. v. Lorion, 470 U.S. 729, 744 (1985); see Camp v. Pitts, 411 U.S. 138, 143 (1973) (per curiam). This Court has "made it abundantly clear" that APA review focuses on the "contemporaneous explanation of the agency decision" that the agency rests upon. Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC, Inc., 435 U.S. 519, 549 (1978) (citing Camp, 411 U.S. at 143).

Accordingly, courts must "confine \* \* \* review to a judgment upon the validity of the grounds upon which the [agency] itself based its action." SEC v. Chenery Corp. 318 U.S. 80, 88 (1943). The agency decision must be upheld if the record reveals a "rational" basis supporting it. Motor Vehicle Mfrs. Ass'n of the U.S., Inc. v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co., 463 U.S. 29, 42-43 (1983). Conversely, if the record supplied by the agency is inadequate to support the agency's decision, "the proper course, except in rare circumstances, is to remand to the agency for additional investigation or explanation." Florida Power & Light Co., 470 U.S. at 744. Either way, "the focal point for judicial review should be the administrative record already in existence, not some new record made initially in the reviewing court." Camp, 411 U.S. at 142.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> As the district court recognized, respondents cannot evade these principles by pointing to their constitutional claims because the APA governs those claims too. App., infra, 104a; see

2. The Court has recognized a narrow exception: if there is "a strong showing of bad faith or improper behavior." Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc. v. Volpe, 401 U.S. 402, 420 (1971). Respondents did not make this "strong showing" here. In nevertheless allowing extra-record discovery into the Secretary's mental state, the district court made two critical errors.

a. The district court improperly "assum[ed] the truth of the allegations in [respondents'] complaints," App., infra, 104a, and drew disputed inferences in respondents' favor. That approach is deeply misguided. It is inconsistent with the requirement that plaintiffs make a "strong showing" -- not just an allegation that passes some minimum threshold of plausibility -- before taking the extraordinary step of piercing the administrative record to examine a decisionmaker's mental processes. See Overton Park, 401 U.S. at 420. It is also inconsistent with the presumption of regularity, which requires courts to presume that executive officers act in good faith. See United States v. Armstrong, 517 U.S. 456, 464 (1996); cf. Harlow v. Fitzgerald, 457 U.S. 800, 807 (1982). And it is inconsistent with principles of inter-branch comity, which caution against imputing bad faith to officials of a coordinate branch -- particularly a Senate-

---

5 U.S.C. 706(2) (B) (providing cause of action to "set aside agency action" "contrary to constitutional right"); FCC v. Fox Television Stations, Inc., 556 U.S. 502, 516 (2009).

confirmed, Cabinet-level constitutional officer. See Cheney, 542 U.S. at 381.

b. The district court also fundamentally misunderstood what “bad faith” requires in this context. It is not bad faith for an agency decisionmaker to favor a particular outcome before fully considering and deciding an issue. Were that enough to constitute “bad faith,” extra-record review would be the rule rather than the rare exception. As long as the decisionmaker sincerely believes the ground on which he ultimately bases his decision, and does not act on a legally forbidden basis, additional subjective reasons do not constitute bad faith or improper bias. See Jagers v. Federal Crop Ins. Corp., 758 F.3d 1179, 1185 (10th Cir. 2014) (“subjective hope” that factfinding would support a desired outcome does not “demonstrate improper bias on the part of agency decisionmakers”). The court relied on four findings, none of which, individually or together, constitutes a “strong showing” of bad faith to entitle respondents to probe the Secretary’s mental state.

i. The district court concluded that Secretary Ross’s supplemental memorandum “could be read to suggest” that the Secretary had already decided to add the citizenship question before he reached out to the Justice Department. App., infra, 101a. But the memorandum, fairly read, says only that the Secretary “thought reinstating a citizenship question could be warranted,” and so reached out to DOJ and other officials to ask

if they would support it. App., infra, 116a (emphases added). That does not indicate prejudgment; it simply shows that the Secretary was leaning in favor of adding the question at the time. As the D.C. Circuit has explained in a related context, it “would eviscerate the proper evolution of policymaking were we to disqualify every administrator who has opinions on the correct course of his agency’s future actions.” Air Transport Ass’n of Am., Inc. v. National Meditation Bd., 663 F.3d 476, 488 (2011) (citation omitted); see Jagers, 758 F.3d at 1185.

Rather, to make a strong showing of prejudgment, respondents should have to show that the Secretary “act[ed] with an ‘unalterably closed mind’” or was “‘unwilling or unable’ to rationally consider arguments.” Mississippi Comm’n on Env’tl. Quality v. EPA., 790 F.3d 138, 183 (D.C. Cir. 2015) (citation omitted). The district court did not apply that test. Had it done so, it could not have found prejudgment here. Nothing in Secretary Ross’s memoranda (or any other document) suggests that Secretary Ross would have asserted the VRA-enforcement rationale had DOJ disagreed or, conversely, that DOJ’s request made the Secretary’s decision a fait accompli. To the contrary, after the Secretary received the Gary Letter, he “initiated a comprehensive review process led by the Census Bureau.” App., infra, 117a. There is no basis to conclude that this process was somehow a sham

or that Secretary Ross had an unalterably closed mind and could not or would not consider new evidence and arguments.

ii. The district court also relied on the fact that "Secretary Ross overruled senior Census Bureau career staff," who recommended against reintroducing a citizenship question. App., infra, 101a-102a. But "the mere fact that the Secretary's decision overruled the views of some of his subordinates is by itself of no moment in any judicial review of his decision." Wisconsin v. City of New York, 517 U.S. 1, 23 (1996). That is particularly true where, as here, the Secretary explained why he disagreed with the proposals favored by the staff. Besides, the ultimate issue is one of policy -- whether the benefits of reinstating the question outweigh the potential costs -- and it is the Secretary, not his staff, "to whom Congress has delegated its constitutional authority over the census." Ibid. It was thus clear legal error to treat overruling career staff as an indicium of bad faith.

iii. The district court further concluded that "plaintiffs' allegations suggest that defendants deviated significantly from standard operating procedures in adding the citizenship question" because they did not conduct "any testing at all." App., infra, 102a. But, as Secretary Ross explained, the citizenship question "has already undergone the \* \* \* testing required for new questions" because the question "is already included on the ACS." Id. at 123a. Therefore, "the citizenship question has been well

tested.” Id. at 118a (emphasis added). The court’s crediting respondents’ allegations was thus clearly erroneous.

iv. Finally, the district court concluded that respondents had made “a prima facie showing” of pretext because DOJ had never previously “suggested that citizenship data collected as part of the decennial census \* \* \* would be helpful let alone necessary to litigating [VRA] claims.” App., infra, 102a-103a. But from 1970 to 2000 DOJ did rely on such data from the decennial census (from the long-form questionnaire) to enforce the VRA. Id. at 126a. And the court never engaged with the reasons set forth in the Gary Letter for why census citizenship data would be more appropriate for VRA enforcement than ACS data. Contemporaneous emails produced in response to the district court’s discovery order only reinforce the conclusion that Commerce officials sincerely believed “that DOJ has a legitimate need for the question to be included.” Id. at 128a.

The bare fact that respondents alleged that “the current Department of Justice has shown little interest in enforcing the [VRA],” App., infra, 103a, neither establishes a prima facie case of Secretary Ross’s pretext nor calls into question DOJ’s commitment to enforce the VRA. Cf. Armstrong, 517 U.S. at 464 (presumption of good faith applies to Executive Branch officials). As DOJ explained in the Gary Letter, citizenship data is useful in enforcing Section 2 of the VRA, which prohibits “vote dilution” by

state and local officials engaged in redistricting. App., infra, 125a. Because redistricting cycles are tied to the census and the next cycle of redistricting will not begin until after the census is taken, there is little Section 2 enforcement to be undertaken at this time. Besides, DOJ's conclusion that citizenship data would be useful in enforcing Section 2 remains true regardless of whether the current administration will have the opportunity to use the information collected.

3. Beyond improperly finding that respondents had made a "strong showing of bad faith," Overton Park, 401 U.S. at 420 -- thereby opening the doors to discovery into Secretary Ross's mental state -- the district court exacerbated its error by compelling the deposition of Secretary Ross himself.

a. "[A] district court should rarely, if ever, compel the attendance of a high-ranking official in a judicial proceeding." In re USA, 624 F.3d 1368, 1376 (11th Cir. 2010). So said this Court in United States v. Morgan, 313 U.S. 409, 421-422 (1941) (Morgan II). Instead, as this Court and lower courts applying Morgan II and its predecessor, Morgan v. United States, 304 U.S. 1 (1938) (Morgan I), have recognized, compelling the testimony of high-ranking government officials is justified only in "extraordinary instances." Arlington Heights, 429 U.S. at 268; accord, e.g., Lederman v. New York City Dep't of Parks & Recreation, 731 F.3d 199, 203 (2d Cir. 2013), cert. denied, 571



U.S. 1237 (2014); In re United States, 624 F.3d at 1376; Bogan v. City of Boston, 489 F.3d 417, 423 (1st Cir. 2007); Simplex Time Recorder Co. v. Sec'y of Labor, 766 F.2d 575, 586 (D.C. Cir. 1985); In re USA, 542 Fed. Appx. 944, 948 (Fed. Cir. 2013). That strict limitation on the compelled testimony of high-ranking officials is necessary because such orders raise significant "separation of powers concerns." In re USA, 624 F.3d at 1372; see Arlington Heights, 429 U.S. at 268 & n.18. As Morgan II emphasized, administrative decisionmaking and judicial processes are "collaborative instrumentalities of justice and the appropriate independence of each should be respected by the other." 313 U.S. at 422. "Just as a judge cannot be subjected to such a scrutiny, so the integrity of the administrative process must be equally respected." Ibid. (citation omitted).

As a practical matter, requiring high-ranking officials to appear for depositions also threatens to "disrupt the functioning of the Executive Branch." Cheney, 542 U.S. at 386. High-ranking government officials "have 'greater duties and time constraints than other witnesses.'" Lederman, 731 F.3d at 203 (citation omitted). As a result, "[i]f courts did not limit the[] depositions [of high-ranking officials], such officials would spend 'an inordinate amount of time tending to pending litigation.'" Ibid. (citation omitted). The threat to inter-branch comity is particularly acute where, as here, the district

court orders a Cabinet Secretary's deposition expressly to test the Secretary's credibility and to probe his deliberations with other Executive Branch officials. See App., infra, 8a-12a; see also 18-cv-2921 Docket entry No. 363 (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 30, 2018) ("[T]he Court remains firmly convinced that \* \* \* there is a need to make credibility determinations[.]").

b. The district court clearly erred in concluding that "exceptional circumstances" justify Secretary Ross's deposition. App., infra, 12a. The district court's "exceptional circumstances" finding was based on its conclusion that "the intent and credibility of Secretary Ross himself" are "central" to respondents' claims. Id. at 10a-11a. That conclusion was erroneous for the reasons above: in a challenge to an agency decision, it is "not the function of the court to probe the mental processes of the Secretary." Morgan II, 313 U.S. at 422 (quoting Morgan I, 304 U.S. at 18); see pp. 29-31, supra.

The district court purported to find an exception to this rule in National Association of Home Builders v. Defenders of Wildlife, 551 U.S. 644 (2007). The court reasoned that, to prevail on their APA claims, "Plaintiffs must show that Secretary Ross 'relied on factors which Congress had not intended [him] to consider, . . . [or] offered an explanation for [his] decision that runs counter to the evidence before the agency.'" App., infra, 6a (quoting Home Builders, 551 U.S. at 658) (brackets and

ellipsis in original). The court then concluded that, because Secretary Ross was the decisionmaker, his deposition would aid respondents in making that showing. Id. at 8a. But Home Builders does not suggest that plaintiffs may look beyond the administrative record to prove their APA claims, let alone that plaintiffs should be permitted to depose a Cabinet Secretary to probe his mental processes. To the contrary, the Court emphasized that courts must “uphold a decision of less than ideal clarity if the agency’s path may reasonably be discerned.” 551 U.S. at 658 (citation omitted). Here, the path Secretary Ross took to his decision to reinstate a citizenship question can readily be discerned from his decision memorandum, his supplemental memorandum, and from the extensive administrative record.

c. Nor did the district court properly evaluate whether respondents could obtain the information they sought by other means. “The duties of high-ranking executive officers should not be interrupted by judicial demands for information that could be obtained elsewhere.” In re Cheney, 544 F.3d 311, 314 (D.C. Cir. 2008) (per curiam). To date, the Commerce Department has given respondents thousands of pages of materials, including materials reviewed and created by the Secretary’s most senior advisers. And respondents have deposed a number of senior Census Bureau and Commerce Department officials. Respondents are now well aware of the circumstances that led to the decision to reinstate a

citizenship question. Secretary Ross's deposition is unlikely to add any material details, all the more so because much of his testimony will likely be privileged.

The district court barely paused to consider whether these materials satisfied respondents' informational demands. Nor did the court ask whether "the Secretary can prepare formal findings \* \* \* that will provide an adequate explanation for his action" as an alternative to direct testimony. Overton Park, 401 U.S. at 420. The court refused to consider any alternative to deposing the Secretary -- such as interrogatories, requests for admission, or a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition, all of which the government offered -- because none would allow respondents to probe the Secretary's credibility or ask follow-up questions. See App., infra, 13a.

d. Instead, the district court jumped straight to ordering a deposition on the ground that Secretary Ross had "unique first-hand knowledge" about his intent in reinstating a citizenship question. App., infra, 6a. But none of the court's rationales withstands scrutiny.

i. The district court asserted that Secretary Ross was "personally and directly involved" in the decision to reinstate a citizenship question "to an unusual degree." App., infra, 8a. Yet the court did not explain how Secretary Ross's direct participation in the decision to reinstate a citizenship question was "unusual." It is not at all exceptional for an agency head to

participate actively in an agency's consideration of a significant policy decision -- particularly one that concerns, as the district court described it, one of the agency head's "most important dut[ies]," Id. at 15a. Nor is it "unusual" that Secretary Ross informally consulted with staff and the Justice Department before DOJ sent its formal request. For these reasons, courts have rejected the notion that a decisionmaker's personal involvement in the decision qualifies as an exceptional circumstance in this context. In re USA, 542 Fed. Appx. at 946 (rejecting plaintiffs' assertion that a high-ranking official's "personal involvement in the decision-making process" provided a basis for deposing that official); In re FDIC, 58 F.3d 1055, 1061 (5th Cir. 1995) (that three directors of the FDIC were the only "persons responsible for making the [challenged] decision" did not justify their depositions).

ii. The district court likewise erred in concluding that Secretary Ross's testimony was needed "to fill critical blanks in the current record." App., infra, 11a. The court identified those "blanks" as "the substance and details of Secretary Ross's early conversations" with "the Attorney General," "interested third parties such as Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach," and "other senior Administration officials." Id. at 11a-12a. But the details of Secretary Ross's consultations with other people have no bearing on the legality of his decision to reinstate the citizenship

question. “[T]he fact that agency heads considered the preferences (even political ones) of other government officials concerning how th[eir] discretion should be exercised does not establish the required degree of bad faith or improper behavior.” In re FDIC, 58 F.3d at 1062; see Sierra Club v. Costle, 657 F.2d 298, 408-409 (D.C. Cir. 1981). The proper focus of a court’s review of Secretary Ross’s decision is on the reasons the Secretary gave for making that decision. That some stakeholders might have had differing reasons for supporting the reinstatement of a citizenship question that they shared with the Secretary is of no consequence. In any event, the administrative record reflects the substantive views of the stakeholders who communicated with Secretary Ross and the Commerce Department, including Secretary Kobach and DOJ. See, e.g., App., infra, 125a-127a (Gary Letter); Administrative Record 763-764 (emails from Secretary Kobach); id. at 765-1276 (additional communications).<sup>4</sup> And to the extent respondents seek information about the Secretary’s deliberations with other government officials, those discussions likely are privileged, rendering the Secretary’s deposition both improper and futile. See Arlington Heights, 429 U.S. at 268 (decisionmaker’s testimony “frequently will be barred by privilege”).

---

<sup>4</sup> The administrative record is available at [www.osec.doc.gov/opog/FOIA/Documents/AR%20-%20FINAL%20FILED%20-%20ALL%20DOCS%20%5bCERTIFICATION-INDEX-DOCUMENTS%5d%206.8.18.pdf](http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/FOIA/Documents/AR%20-%20FINAL%20FILED%20-%20ALL%20DOCS%20%5bCERTIFICATION-INDEX-DOCUMENTS%5d%206.8.18.pdf).

iii. Nor is there any legitimate basis for the district court's conclusion that statements Secretary Ross made in his decision memoranda and in sworn testimony to Congress placed his credibility "squarely at issue in these cases." App., infra, 10a. The court was troubled by statements that, in its view, suggested the Secretary had never considered the citizenship question until DOJ sent the Gary Letter. Ibid. But none of the statements in fact says that, and the court's uncharitable inferences to the contrary ignore the context of these statements and violate the presumption of regularity. Armstrong, 517 U.S. at 464. For example, the Secretary in his March 2018 memorandum did not say he "'set out to take a hard look' at adding the citizenship question 'following receipt'" of the Gary Letter, App., infra, 10a (emphasis modified, citation and brackets omitted); the Secretary actually said he "set out to take a hard look at the request" following receipt of DOJ's request, id. at 117a (emphasis added). The Secretary never said that he had not previously considered whether to reinstate a citizenship question, or that he had not had discussions with other agencies or government officials before he received DOJ's formal request. Nor would it have made sense for the Secretary to take a formal "hard look" at DOJ's request before receiving that request.

Similarly, the Secretary's March 20 statement to Congress that he was "'responding solely to the Department of Justice's

request,'" App., infra, 10a (quoting March 20 testimony, available at 2018 WLNR 8815056), was actually in answer to a question asking whether he was also responding to requests from third parties, see 2018 WLNR 8815056. And the Secretary's admittedly imprecise March 22 statement that DOJ "'initiated the request for inclusion of the citizenship question,'" App., infra, 10a (quoting March 22 testimony, available at 2018 WLNR 8951469), was in response to a question about whether Commerce planned to include a citizenship question on the 2020 census, not a question about the Secretary's decision-making process. And the statement was immediately followed by an acknowledgment that he had been communicating with "quite a lot of parties on both sides of the question" and that he "ha[d] not made a final decision, as yet" on this "very important and very complicated question," 2018 WLNR 8951469. Only by ignoring the context of these statements and eliding the presumption of regularity could the court find that the Secretary's credibility was "squarely at issue." App., infra, 10a.

4. For largely the same reasons, the district court also erred in compelling the deposition of Acting AAG Gore. See App., infra, 17a-19a. The court concluded that deposing Acting AAG Gore was justified in light of his "apparent role in drafting the Department of Justice's December 12, 2017 letter requesting that a citizenship question be added to the decennial census." Id. at 18a. For this reason, the court stated, his testimony was "plainly



'relevant,' within the broad definition of that term for purposes of discovery." Ibid. But were that the rule, compelling the testimony of a high-ranking official would be routine, not exceptional -- in contravention of this Court's decisions in Morgan II and other cases. See pp. 29-31, supra.

Moreover, deposing Acting AAG Gore would achieve no legitimate purpose. After all, respondents' stated purpose of the extra-record discovery is to probe Secretary Ross's mental state, not Acting AAG Gore's. There has been no plausible suggestion that DOJ acted in bad faith; nor have respondents provided any basis to believe that the reasons DOJ gave for reinstating the citizenship question in the Gary Letter did not represent DOJ's views. For that reason, there is no basis for the district court and Second Circuit's assertion that deposing Acting AAG Gore would yield information about DOJ's position "that cannot be obtained from another source," App., infra, 4a (quoting id. at 18a). And Acting AAG Gore's testimony on such topics is likely to be protected by privilege, rendering a deposition focused on these topics improper and futile. Arlington Heights, 429 U.S. at 268.

B. No Other Adequate Means Exist To Attain Relief

Absent review on mandamus, the district court's orders will be effectively unreviewable on appeal from final judgment. Secretary Ross's deposition is set for October 11, 2018, and Acting AAG Gore's for October 10. If the Second Circuit denies mandamus

relief and refuses to stay the district court's orders, the government indisputably has "no other adequate means" of protecting its interests aside from this petition. Perry, 558 U.S. at 190 (citation omitted).

C. Mandamus Is Appropriate Under The Circumstances

As this Court has recognized, "mandamus standards are broad enough to allow a court of appeals to prevent a lower court from interfering with a coequal branch's ability to discharge its constitutional responsibilities." Cheney, 542 U.S. at 382. Here, high-ranking officials in two agencies -- including a Cabinet Secretary -- will be forced to prepare for and attend depositions, which will indisputably "interfer[e] with" their "ability to discharge [their] constitutional responsibilities." Ibid. And document discovery -- especially into the Secretary's mental state -- also is intrusive and disruptive to an agency's functioning. Cf. In re United States, 138 S. Ct. at 445.

III. THERE IS A LIKELIHOOD THAT IRREPARABLE HARM WILL RESULT FROM THE DENIAL OF A STAY

In contrast to the harms to the government articulated above, which are plainly irreparable, respondents will suffer relatively little harm from an immediate stay. Unlike the impending depositions next week, trial is still more than a month away. And under the bedrock principles of administrative law discussed above, respondents can and must litigate their APA claims on "the

administrative record already in existence, not some new record made initially in the reviewing court." Camp, 411 U.S. at 142.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, this Court should stay the district court's orders to the extent they compel (1) the deposition of Commerce Secretary Ross; (2) the deposition of Acting AAG Gore; and (3) discovery beyond the administrative record. The stay should remain in effect pending the completion of further proceedings in this Court over the government's forthcoming petition for a writ of mandamus or certiorari. Alternatively, the government requests the Court to construe this application as that petition for a writ of mandamus or certiorari. The government further requests an immediate administrative stay pending the Court's consideration of this application.

Respectfully submitted.

NOEL J. FRANCISCO  
Solicitor General

OCTOBER 2018

APPENDIX

Court of appeals order temporarily staying deposition  
of Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., until  
Oct. 9, 2018 (2d Cir. Sept. 28, 2018) .....1a

Court of appeals order denying a writ of mandamus and  
lifting stay for deposition of Acting Assistant  
Attorney General John M. Gore (2d Cir. Sept. 25, 2018) .....3a

District court order compelling deposition of Secretary of  
Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr. (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 21, 2018) .....5a

District court order compelling deposition of  
Acting Assistant Attorney General John M. Gore  
(S.D.N.Y. Aug. 17, 2018) .....17a

District court oral order expanding discovery  
(S.D.N.Y. July 3, 2018) .....20a

Supplemental memorandum by Secretary of Commerce Wilbur  
L. Ross, Jr. regarding the administrative record in  
census litigation (June 21, 2018) .....116a

Memorandum from Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., Secretary of Commerce,  
to Karen Dunn Kelley, Under Secretary for Economic  
Affairs (Mar. 26, 2018) .....117a

Letter from Arthur E. Gary, General Counsel,  
Justice Management Division, to Dr. Ron Jarmin,  
Director, U.S. Census Bureau (Dec. 12, 2017) .....125a

Email from Earl Comstock to Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., Secretary  
of Commerce (May 2, 2017) .....128a

Court of appeals order denying stay of further discovery,  
including deposition of Acting Assistant Attorney General  
John M. Gore (2d Cir. Oct. 2, 2018) .....129a

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE  
SECOND CIRCUIT**

At a Stated Term of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, held at the Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse, 40 Foley Square, in the City of New York, on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of September, two thousand and eighteen.

Before: Peter W. Hall,  
*Circuit Judge.*

In Re: United States Department of Commerce, Wilbur L. Ross, in his official capacity as Secretary of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, an agency within the United States Department of Commerce, Ron S. Jarmin, in his capacity as the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau,

**ORDER**

Docket No. 18-2856

Petitioners.

\*\*\*\*\*

United States Department of Commerce, Wilbur L. Ross, in his official capacity as Secretary of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, an agency within the United States Department of Commerce, Ron S. Jarmin, in his capacity as the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau,

Petitioners,

v.

State of New York, State of Connecticut, State of Delaware, District of Columbia, State of Illinois, State of Iowa, State of Maryland, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, State of Minnesota, State of New Jersey, State of New Mexico, State of North Carolina, State of Oregon, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, State of Rhode Island, Commonwealth of Virginia, State of Vermont, State of Washington, City of Chicago, Illinois, City of New York, City of Philadelphia, City of Providence, City and County of San Francisco, California, United States Conference of Mayors, City of Seattle, Washington, City of Pittsburgh, County of Cameron, State of Colorado, City of Central Falls, City of Columbus, County of El Paso, County of Monterey, County of Hidalgo,

Respondents.

In Re: United States Department of Commerce, Wilbur L. Ross, in his official capacity as Secretary of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, an agency within the United States Department of Commerce, Ron S. Jarmin, in his capacity as the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau,

Docket No. 18-2857

Petitioners.

\*\*\*\*\*

United States Department of Commerce, Wilbur L. Ross, in his official capacity as Secretary of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, an agency within the United States Department of Commerce, Ron S. Jarmin, in his capacity as the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau,

Petitioners,

v.

New York Immigration Coalition, CASA de Maryland, Inc., American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, ADC Research Institute, Make the Road New York,

Respondents.

As part of its petitions for writ of mandamus, the Government seeks an administrative stay of the depositions of Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and John Gore, the Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the deposition of Secretary Ross is stayed pending determination of the petitions. Answers to the petitions must be filed by October 4, 2018 at noon. The petitions, as they pertain to Secretary Ross, are REFERRED to the motions panel sitting on Tuesday, October 9, 2018. To the extent the Government seeks a stay of Acting Attorney General Gore's deposition, that request is REFERRED to the panel that determined the petitions in docket numbers 18-2652 and 18-2659.

For the Court:  
Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe,  
Clerk of Court


A True Copy

Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe, Clerk

United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit


S.D.N.Y.-N.Y.C.  
18-cv-2921  
18-cv-5025  
Furman, J.

United States Court of Appeals  
FOR THE  
SECOND CIRCUIT

---

At a stated term of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, held at the Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse, 40 Foley Square, in the City of New York, on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of September, two thousand eighteen.

Present:

Pierre N. Leval,  
Rosemary S. Pooler,  
Richard C. Wesley,  
*Circuit Judges.*

---

In Re: United States Department of Commerce, Wilbur L. Ross, in his official capacity as Secretary of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, an agency within the United States Department of Commerce, Ron S. Jarmin, in his capacity as the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau,

18-2652  
18-2659

*Petitioners.*

---

Petitioners seek a writ of mandamus directing the halt of discovery in two consolidated district court cases. Upon due consideration, it is hereby ORDERED that the mandamus petitions are DENIED, and the stay of the district court's order compelling the deposition of Acting Assistant Attorney General John Gore is LIFTED.

Mandamus is “a drastic and extraordinary remedy reserved for really extraordinary causes.” *Balintulo v. Daimler AG*, 727 F.3d 174, 186 (2d Cir. 2013) (quoting *Cheney v. U.S. Dist. Ct. for D.C.*, 542 U.S. 367, 380 (2004)). “We issue the writ only in ‘exceptional circumstances amounting to a judicial usurpation of power or a clear abuse of discretion.’” *In re Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, N.Y., Inc.*, 745 F.3d 30, 35 (2d Cir. 2014) (quoting *Cheney*, 542 U.S. at 380). To obtain mandamus relief, a petitioner must show that (1) it has “no other adequate means to attain the relief [it] desires,” (2) “the writ is appropriate under the circumstances,” and (3) “the ‘right to issuance of the writ is clear and indisputable.’” *Id.* (alteration in original) (quoting *Cheney*, 542 U.S. at 380–81). “Because the writ of mandamus is such an extraordinary remedy, our analysis of whether the petitioning party has a ‘clear and indisputable’ right to the writ is

necessarily more deferential to the district court than our review on direct appeal.” *Linde v. Arab Bank, PLC*, 706 F.3d 92, 108–09 (2d Cir. 2013).

We assume without deciding that Petitioners do not have another “adequate means to attain the relief” they seek, and that the writ would be “appropriate under the circumstances” if Petitioners were entitled to it. *See Cheney*, 542 U.S. at 380–81 (internal quotation marks omitted). However, mandamus is not warranted here because Petitioners have not persuaded us that their “right to issuance of the writ is clear and indisputable.” *Id.* at 381 (internal quotation marks omitted). The district court’s discovery orders do not amount to “a judicial usurpation of power or a clear abuse of discretion.” *In re Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, N.Y., Inc.*, 745 F.3d at 35 (quoting *Cheney*, 542 U.S. at 380).

The district court applied controlling case law and made careful factual findings supporting its conclusion that the initial administrative record was incomplete and that limited extra-record discovery was warranted. *See Nat’l Audubon Soc’y v. Hoffman*, 132 F.3d 7, 14 (2d Cir. 1997) (stating that, “[d]espite the general ‘record rule,’” extra-record discovery “may be appropriate when there has been a strong showing in support of a claim of bad faith or improper behavior on the part of agency decisionmakers or where the absence of formal administrative findings makes such investigation necessary in order to determine the reasons for the agency’s choice”). We cannot say that the district court clearly abused its discretion in concluding that plaintiffs made a sufficient showing of “bad faith or improper behavior” to warrant limited extra-record discovery. *See id.*

Nor did the district court clearly abuse its discretion in ordering the deposition of Acting Assistant Attorney General Gore given his apparent authorship of the December 2017 Department of Justice letter. *See Lederman v. New York City Dep’t of Parks & Recreation*, 731 F.3d 199, 203 (2d Cir. 2013) (holding that, “to depose a high-ranking government official, a party must demonstrate exceptional circumstances justifying the deposition—for example, that the official has unique first-hand knowledge related to the litigated claims or that the necessary information cannot be obtained through other, less burdensome or intrusive means”). We find no clear abuse of discretion in the district court’s determination that Acting Assistant Attorney General Gore’s deposition is warranted because he “possesses relevant information that cannot be obtained from another source” related to plaintiffs’ allegations that the Secretary used the December 2017 Department of Justice letter as a pretextual legal justification for adding the citizenship question. Addendum at 2; *New York v. U.S. Dep’t of Commerce*, 18-CV-2921 (JMF), 18-CV-5025 (JMF), 2018 WL 4279467, at \*4 (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 7, 2018).

FOR THE COURT:

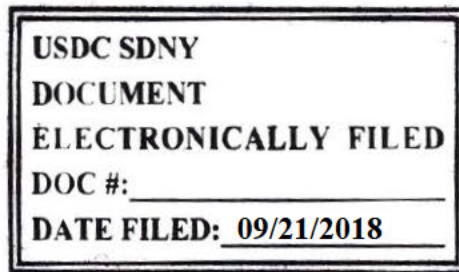
Catherine O’Hagan Wolfe, Clerk of Court

 Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe





UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK



-----X  
STATE OF NEW YORK, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

-v-

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, et al.,

Defendants.  
-----X

18-CV-2921 (JMF)

OPINION AND ORDER

JESSE M. FURMAN, United States District Judge:

In these consolidated cases, familiarity with which is assumed, Plaintiffs bring claims under the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”), 5 U.S.C. § 701 *et seq.*, and the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment challenging the decision of Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr. to reinstate a question concerning citizenship status on the 2020 census questionnaire. *See generally New York v. U.S. Dep’t of Commerce*, 315 F. Supp. 3d 766 (S.D.N.Y. 2018). Now pending is a question that has loomed large since July 3, 2018, when the Court authorized extra-record discovery on the ground that Plaintiffs had “made a strong preliminary or *prima facie* showing that they will find material beyond the Administrative Record indicative of bad faith.” (Docket No. 205 (“July 3rd Tr.”), at 85). That question, which is the subject of competing letter briefs, is whether Secretary Ross himself must sit for a deposition. (*See* Docket No. 314 (“Pls.’ Letter”); Docket No. 320 (“Defs.’ Letter”); Docket No. 325 (“Pls.’ Reply”). Applying well-established principles to the unusual facts of these cases, the Court concludes that the question is not a close one: Secretary Ross must sit for a deposition because, among other things, his intent and credibility are directly at issue in these cases.

The Second Circuit established the standards relevant to the present dispute in *Lederman v. New York City Department of Parks & Recreation*, 731 F.3d 199 (2d Cir. 2013). In that case, the Circuit observed that courts had long held “that a high-ranking government official should not — absent exceptional circumstances — be deposed or called to testify regarding the reasons for taking official action, ‘including the manner and extent of his study of the record and his consultation with subordinates.’” *Id.* at 203 (quoting *United States v. Morgan*, 313 U.S. 409, 422 (1941)). “High-ranking government officials,” the Court explained, “are generally shielded from depositions because they have greater duties and time constraints than other witnesses. If courts did not limit these depositions, such officials would spend an inordinate amount of time tending to pending litigation.” *Id.* (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). Joining several other courts of appeals, the Circuit thus held that “to depose a high-ranking government official, a party must demonstrate exceptional circumstances justifying the deposition.” *Id.* The Court then proffered two *alternative* examples of showings that would satisfy the “exceptional circumstances” standard: “that the official has unique first-hand knowledge related to the litigated claims *or* that the necessary information cannot be obtained through other, less burdensome or intrusive means.” *Id.* (emphasis added).<sup>1</sup>

Those standards compel the conclusion that a deposition of Secretary Ross is appropriate. First, Secretary Ross plainly has “unique first-hand knowledge related to the litigated claims.” 731 F.3d at 203. To prevail on their claims under the APA, Plaintiffs must show that Secretary Ross “relied on factors which Congress had not intended [him] to consider, . . . [or] offered an explanation for [his] decision that runs counter to the evidence before the agency.” *Nat’l Ass’n*

---

<sup>1</sup> Defendants argue that where, as here, the high-ranking official in question is a member of the President’s Cabinet, the “hurdle is exceptionally high.” (Defs.’ Letter at 1). That argument, however, finds no support in *Lederman*. In any event, even if an “exceptionally high” standard did apply here, the result would be the same given the Court’s findings below.

*of Home Builders v. Defs. of Wildlife*, 551 U.S. 644, 658 (2007) (quoting *Motor Vehicle Mfrs. Ass'n of U.S., Inc. v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co.*, 463 U.S. 29, 43 (1983)). As Defendants themselves have conceded (*see* Docket No. 150, at 15), one way Plaintiffs can do so is by showing that the stated rationale for Secretary Ross's decision was not his *actual* rationale. Indeed, the Supreme Court has long held that the APA requires an agency decisionmaker to "disclose the basis of its" decision, *Burlington Truck Lines, Inc. v. United States*, 371 U.S. 156, 168 (1962) (internal quotation marks omitted), a requirement that would be for naught if the agency could conceal the *actual* basis for its decision, *see also FTC v. Sperry & Hutchinson Co.*, 405 U.S. 233, 248-49 (1972). To prevail on their other claim — under the Due Process clause — Plaintiffs must show that an "invidious discriminatory purpose" was a "motivating factor" in Secretary Ross's decision. *Village of Arlington Heights v. Metro. Hous. Dev. Corp.*, 429 U.S. 252, 266 (1977). That analysis "demands a sensitive inquiry into such circumstantial and direct evidence of intent as may be available," including "[t]he specific sequence of events leading up the challenged decision," the "administrative history [including] . . . contemporary statements by members of the decisionmaking body," and even direct testimony from decisionmakers "concerning the purpose of the official action." *Id.* at 266-68. If that evidence establishes that the stated reason for Secretary Ross's decision was not the real one, a reasonable factfinder may be able to infer from that and other evidence that he was "dissembling to cover up a discriminatory purpose." *New York*, 315 F. Supp. 3d at 809 (quoting *Reeves v. Sanderson Plumbing Prods., Inc.*, 530 U.S. 133, 147 (2000)).

Notably, in litigating earlier discovery disputes, Defendants all but admitted that Plaintiffs' claims turn on the intent of Secretary Ross himself. For instance, in litigating the propriety of Defendants' invocation of the deliberative process privilege, Defendants contended that Plaintiffs should not receive materials prepared by Secretary Ross's subordinates because

such materials would not shed light on Plaintiffs’ “claims that the ultimate decisionmaker’s decision” — that is, *Secretary Ross’s* decision — “was based on pretext.” (Docket No. 315, at 3). And in seeking to preclude a deposition of the Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights — the purported ghostwriter of the DOJ letter — Defendants argued vigorously that “[t]he relevant question” in these cases “is whether *Commerce’s* stated reasons for reinstating the citizenship question were pretextual.” (Docket No. 255, at 2 (emphasis in original)). As Defendants put it: “*Commerce* was the decision-maker, not DOJ. . . . [T]herefore, *Commerce’s* intent is at issue not DOJ’s.” (*Id.* (emphases added)). In a footnote, Defendants went even further, asserting that “[t]he sole inquiry should be whether *Commerce* actually believed the articulated basis for adopting the policy.” (*Id.* at 2 n.1 (emphasis added)). Undoubtedly, Defendants deliberately substituted the word “Commerce” for “Secretary Ross” knowing full well that Plaintiffs’ request to depose him was coming down the pike. But given that Secretary Ross himself “was the decision-maker” and that it was he who “articulated” the “basis for adopting the policy,” the significance of Defendants’ own prior concessions about the centrality of the “decision-maker’s” intent cannot be understated.

Indeed, in the unusual circumstances presented here, the concededly relevant inquiry into “Commerce’s intent” could not possibly be conducted without the testimony of Secretary Ross himself. Critically, that is not the case merely because Secretary Ross made the decision that Plaintiffs are challenging — indeed, that could justify the deposition of a high-ranking government official in almost every APA case, contrary to the teachings of *Lederman*. Instead, it is the case because Secretary Ross was personally and directly involved in the decision, and the unusual process leading to it, to an unusual degree. *See, e.g., United States v. City of New York*, No. 07-CV-2067 (NGG) (RLM), 2009 WL 2423307, at \*2-3 (E.D.N.Y. Aug. 5, 2009) (authorizing the Mayor’s deposition where his congressional testimony “suggest[ed] his direct

involvement in the events at issue”). By his own admission, Secretary Ross “began considering . . . whether to reinstate a citizenship question” shortly after his appointment in February 2017 and well before December 12, 2017, when the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) made a formal request to do so. (Docket No. 189-1). In connection with that early consideration, Secretary Ross consulted with various “other governmental officials” — although precisely with whom and when remains less than crystal clear. (*Id.*; *see also* Docket Nos. 313, 319). Additionally, Secretary Ross manifested an unusually strong personal interest in the matter, demanding to know as early as May 2017 — seven months before the DOJ request — why no action had been taken on his “months old request that we include the citizenship question.” (Docket No. 212, at 3699).<sup>2</sup> And he personally lobbied the Attorney General to submit the request that he “then later relied on to justify his decision,” *New York v. U.S. Dep’t of Commerce*, No. 18-CV-2921 (JMF), 2018 WL 4279467, at \*4 (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 7, 2018) (*see also* Docket Nos. 314-4, 314-5), and he did so despite being told that DOJ “did not want to raise the question,” (Docket No. 325-1). Finally, as the Court has noted elsewhere, *see New York*, 315 F. Supp. 3d at 808, he did all this — and ultimately mandated the addition of the citizenship question — over the strong and continuing opposition of subject-matter experts at the Census Bureau. (*See* Docket No. 325-2, at 5; Docket No. 173, at 1277-85, 1308-12).<sup>3</sup>

The foregoing record is enough to justify the relief Plaintiffs seek, but a deposition is also warranted because Defendants — and Secretary Ross himself — have placed the credibility of

---

<sup>2</sup> Docket No. 212 is Defendants’ notice of the filing of supplemental materials. Given the volume of those materials, Defendants did not file them directly on the docket, but made them available at <http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/FOIA/Documents/CensusProd001.zip>.

<sup>3</sup> Docket No. 173 is Defendants’ filing of (the first part of) the Administrative Record. Given the volume of those materials, Defendants did not file them directly on the docket, but made them available at [http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/FOIA/Documents/AR%20-%20FINAL%20FILED%20-%20ALL%20DOCS%20\[CERTIFICATION-INDEX-DOCUMENTS\]%206.8.18.pdf](http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/FOIA/Documents/AR%20-%20FINAL%20FILED%20-%20ALL%20DOCS%20[CERTIFICATION-INDEX-DOCUMENTS]%206.8.18.pdf).

Secretary Ross squarely at issue in these cases. In his March 2018 decision memorandum, for example, Secretary Ross stated that he “*set out to take a hard look*” at adding the citizenship question “[*f*ollowing receipt” of the December 2017 request from DOJ. (A.R. 1313 (emphases added)). Additionally, in sworn testimony before the House of Representatives, Secretary Ross claimed that DOJ had “*initiated the request for inclusion of the citizenship question,*” *Hearing on Recent Trade Actions, Including Section 232 Determinations on Steel & Aluminum: Hearing Before the H. Ways & Means Comm.*, 115th Cong. 24 (2018), at 2018 WLNR 8951469, and that he was “*responding solely to the Department of Justice’s request,*” *Hearing on F.Y. 2019 Dep’t of Commerce Budget: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Commerce, Justice, Sci., & Related Agencies of the H. Comm. on Appropriations*, 115th Cong. 9 (2018), at 2018 WLNR 8815056 (“*Mar. 20, 2018 Hearing*”) (emphases added). The record developed thus far, however, casts grave doubt on those claims. (*See, e.g.*, Docket No. 189-1 (conceding that Secretary Ross and his staff “*inquired whether the Department of Justice . . . would support, and if so would request, inclusion of a citizenship question*” (emphasis added)); *see* July 3rd Tr. 79-80, 82-83). *See also New York*, 315 F. Supp. 3d at 808-09. Equally significant, Secretary Ross testified under oath that he was “*not aware*” of any discussions between him and “*anyone in the White House*” regarding the addition of the citizenship question. *Mar. 20, 2018 Hearing* at 21 (“*Q: Has the President or anyone in the White House discussed with you or anyone on your team about adding this citizenship question? A: I’m not aware of any such.*”). But there is now reason to believe that Steve Bannon, then a senior advisor in the White House, was among the “*other government officials*” whom Secretary Ross consulted about the citizenship question. (*See* Docket Nos. 314-1, 314-3).

In short, it is indisputable — and in other (perhaps less guarded) moments, Defendants themselves have not disputed — that the intent and credibility of Secretary Ross himself are not

merely relevant, but central, to Plaintiffs claims in this case. It nearly goes without saying that Plaintiffs cannot meaningfully probe or test, and the Court cannot meaningfully evaluate, Secretary Ross's intent and credibility without granting Plaintiffs an opportunity to confront and cross-examine him. *See, e.g., Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254, 269 (1970) ("In almost every setting where important decisions turn on questions of fact, due process requires an opportunity to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses."). Indeed, the Supreme Court and the Second Circuit have observed in other contexts that "where motive and intent play leading roles" and "the proof is largely in [Defendants'] hands," as are the case here, it is critical that the relevant witnesses be "present and subject to cross-examination" so "that their credibility and the weight to be given their testimony can be appraised." *Poller v. Columbia Broad. Sys., Inc.*, 368 U.S. 464, 473 (1962); *see DiRienzo v. Philip Servs. Corp.*, 294 F.3d 21, 30 (2d Cir. 2002) ("Live testimony is especially important . . . where the factfinder's evaluation of witnesses' credibility is central to the resolution of the issues."); *cf. Goldberg*, 397 U.S. at 269 ("[W]here credibility and veracity are at issue, . . . written submissions are a wholly unsatisfactory basis for decision.").

Separate and apart from that, Plaintiffs have demonstrated that taking a deposition of Secretary Ross may be the only way to fill in critical blanks in the current record. Notably, Secretary Ross's three closest and most senior advisors who advised on the citizenship question — his Chief of Staff, the Acting Deputy Secretary, and the Policy Director/Deputy Chief of Staff — testified repeatedly that Secretary Ross was the only person who could provide certain information central to Plaintiffs claims. (*See, e.g.,* Pls.' Letter, Ex. 6, at 85 ("You would have to ask [Secretary Ross]."), 101 (same), 209 (same), 210 (same); *id.* Ex. 8, at 111-13 (same)). Among other things, no witness has been able to — or presumably could — testify to the substance and details of Secretary Ross's early conversations regarding the citizenship question with the Attorney General or with interested third parties such as Kansas Secretary of State Kris

Kobach. (*See* Pls.’ Letter, Ex. 6, at 82-86, 119-20, 167-68; *id.* Ex. 7 at 57-58; *id.* Ex. 8 at 205-07). No witness has been able to identify to whom Secretary Ross was referring when he admitted that “other senior Administration officials . . . raised” the idea of the citizenship question before he began considering it. (*See* Pls.’ Letter, Ex. 6 at 101; *id.* Ex. 7 at 71-73; *id.* Ex. 8 at 111-13). And despite an allegedly diligent investigation — including “consultation” of an unknown nature and extent with Secretary Ross himself (Sept. 14, 2018 Conf. Tr. 16) — Defendants have not been able to identify precisely to whom Secretary Ross spoke about the citizenship question, let alone when, in the critical months before DOJ’s December 2017 letter, (*see id.*). At a minimum, Plaintiffs are entitled to make good-faith efforts to refresh Secretary Ross’s recollections of these critical facts and to test the credibility of any claimed lack of memory in a deposition. Indeed, there is no other way they could do so.

In sum, for the foregoing reasons, it is plain that “exceptional circumstances” are present here, both because Secretary Ross has “unique first-hand knowledge related to the litigated claims” *and* because “the necessary information cannot be obtained through other, less burdensome or intrusive means.” *Lederman*, 731 F.3d at 203. In arguing otherwise, Defendants contend that this Court’s review of Secretary Ross’s decision must be limited to the administrative record. (Defs.’ Letter 2). But that assertion ignores Plaintiffs’ due process claim, in which they plausibly allege that an invidious discriminatory purpose was a motivating factor in the challenged decision. *See New York*, 315 F. Supp. 3d at 808-11. Evaluation of that claim requires “a sensitive inquiry into such circumstantial and direct evidence of intent as may be available,” including, in appropriate circumstances, “the testimony of decisionmakers.” *Id.* at 807, 808 (internal quotation marks omitted). Defendants’ assertion also overlooks that the testimony of decisionmakers can be required even under the APA. In *Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc. v. Volpe*, 401 U.S. 402 (1971), for example, the Supreme Court made clear



that the APA requires a “thorough, probing, in-depth review” of agency action, including a “searching and careful” inquiry into the facts. *Id.* at 415-16. And where there is “a strong showing of bad faith or improper behavior,” that permits a court to “require the administrative officials who participated in the decision to give testimony explaining their action.” *Id.* As the Court held on July 3rd, that is the case here. (*See* July 3rd Tr. 82-84). “If anything, the basis for that conclusion appears even stronger today.” *New York*, 2018 WL 4279467, at \*3.

Defendants also contend that the information Plaintiffs seek can be obtained from other sources, such as a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition of the Department of Commerce, interrogatories, or requests for admission. (Defs.’ Letter 3). But that contention is unpersuasive for several reasons. First, none of those means are adequate to test or evaluate Secretary Ross’s credibility. Second, none allows Plaintiffs the opportunity to try to refresh Secretary Ross’s recollection if that proves to be necessary (as seems likely, *see* Sept. 14, 2018 Conf. Tr. 16) or to ask follow-up questions. *See Fish v. Kobach*, 320 F.R.D. 566, 579 (D. Kan. 2017) (authorizing the deposition of a high-ranking official, in lieu of further written discovery, in part because a deposition “has the advantage of allowing for immediate follow-up questions by plaintiffs’ counsel”). Third, Plaintiffs have already pursued several of these options, yet gaps in the record remain. (*See* Docket Nos. 313, 319; Sept. 14, 2018 Conf. Tr. 14-16). And finally, to adequately respond to additional interrogatories, prepare a Rule 30(b)(6) witness, or respond to requests for admission, Defendants would have to burden Secretary Ross anyway. “Ordering a deposition at this time is a more efficient means” of resolving Plaintiffs’ claims “than burdening the parties and the [Secretary] with further rounds of interrogatories, and, possibly, further court rulings and appeals.” *City of New York*, 2009 WL 2423307, at \*3.

Two final points warrant emphasis. First, the Court’s conclusion that Plaintiffs are entitled to depose Secretary Ross is not quite as unprecedented as Defendants suggest. To be

sure, depositions of agency heads are rare — and for good reasons. But courts have not hesitated to take testimony from federal agency heads (whether voluntarily or, if necessary, by order) where, as here, the circumstances warranted them. *See, e.g., Cobell v. Babbitt*, 91 F. Supp. 2d 1, 6 & n.1 (D.D.C. 1999) (reaching a decision after a trial at which the Secretary of the Interior testified — shortly after being held in civil contempt for violating the Court’s discovery order); *D.C. Fed’n of Civic Ass’ns v. Volpe*, 316 F. Supp. 754, 760 nn.12 & 36 (D.D.C. 1970) (deposition and trial testimony required from the Secretary of Transportation), *rev’d on other grounds sub nom. D.C. Fed’n of Civic Ass’ns v. Volpe*, 459 F.2d 1231 (D.C. Cir. 1971); *Am. Broad. Cos. v. U.S. Info. Agency*, 599 F. Supp. 765, 768-69 (D.D.C. 1984) (requiring a deposition of the head of the United States Information Agency); *Union Sav. Bank of Patchogue, N.Y. v. Saxon*, 209 F. Supp. 319, 319-20 (D.D.C. 1962) (compelling a deposition of the Comptroller of the Currency); *see also Volpe*, 459 F.2d at 1237-38 (approving of the district court’s decision to require the Secretary’s testimony).

Courts have also permitted testimony from former agency heads about the reasons for official actions taken while they were still in office. *See, e.g., Starr Int’l Co. v. United States*, 121 Fed. Cl. 428, 431 (2015) (Secretary of the Treasury and Chair of the Federal Reserve), *vacated in part on other grounds*, 856 F.3d 953 (Fed. Cir. 2017); *McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. United States*, 35 Fed. Cl. 358, 372 (1996) (Secretary of Defense). And, contrary to Defendants’ suggestion that authorizing a deposition of Secretary Ross “would have serious repercussions for the relationship between two coequal branches of government” (Defs.’ Letter 1 (internal quotation marks omitted)), the Supreme Court has made clear that “interactions between the Judicial Branch and the Executive, even quite burdensome interactions,” do not “necessarily rise to the level of constitutionally forbidden impairment of the Executive’s ability to perform its constitutionally mandated functions.” *Clinton v. Jones*, 520 U.S. 681, 702 (1997).

If separation-of-powers principles do not call for a federal court to refrain from exercising “its traditional Article III jurisdiction” even where exercising that jurisdiction may “significantly burden the time and attention” of *the President*, *see id.* at 703, they surely do not call for refraining from the exercise of this Court’s jurisdiction here.<sup>4</sup>

Second, in the final analysis, there is something surprising, if not unsettling, about Defendants’ aggressive efforts to shield Secretary Ross from having to answer questions about his conduct in adding the citizenship question to the census questionnaire. At bottom, limitations on depositions of high-ranking officials are rooted in the notion that it would be contrary to the public interest to allow litigants to interfere too easily with their important duties. *See Lederman*, 731 F.3d at 203. The fair and orderly administration of the census, however, is arguably the Secretary of Commerce’s most important duty, and it is critically important that the public have “confidence in the integrity of the process” underlying “this mainstay of our democracy.” *Franklin v. Massachusetts*, 505 U.S. 788, 818 (1992) (Stevens, J., concurring in part and concurring in the judgment). In light of that, and the unusual circumstances presented in these cases, the public interest weighs heavily in favor of both transparency and ensuring the development of a comprehensive record to evaluate the propriety of Secretary Ross’s decision. In short, the public interest weighs heavily in favor of granting Plaintiffs’ application for an order requiring Secretary Ross to sit for a deposition.

---

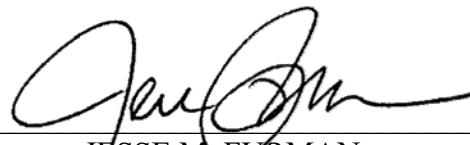
<sup>4</sup> It bears mentioning that Secretary Ross has testified several times on the subject of this litigation before Congress — a co-equal branch not only of the Executive, but also of the Judiciary. (*See* Pls.’ Reply 3 n.6). Although congressional testimony, and preparation for the same, undoubtedly impose serious burdens on Executive Branch officials, even high-ranking Executive Branch officials must comply with subpoenas to testify before Congress. *See Comm. on Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives v. Miers*, 558 F. Supp. 2d 53, 106-07 (D.D.C. 2008). The obligation to give testimony in proceedings pending before an Article III court, where necessary, is of no lesser importance.

That said, mindful of the burdens that a deposition will impose on Secretary Ross and the scope of the existing record (including the fact that Secretary Ross has already testified before Congress about his decision to add the citizenship question), the Court limits the deposition to four hours in length, *see, e.g., Arista Records LLC v. Lime Grp. LLC*, No. 06-CV-5936 (GEL), 2008 WL 1752254, at \*1 (S.D.N.Y. Apr. 16, 2008) (“A district court has broad discretion to set the length of depositions appropriate to the circumstances of the case.”), and mandates that it be conducted at the Department of Commerce or another location convenient for Secretary Ross. The Court, however, rejects Defendants’ contention that the deposition “should be held only after all other discovery is concluded,” (Defs.’ Letter 3), in no small part because the smaller the window, the harder it will undoubtedly be to schedule the deposition. Finally, the Court declines Defendants’ request to “stay its order for 14 days or until Defendants’ anticipated mandamus petition is resolved, whichever is later.” (*Id.*). Putting aside the fact that Defendants do not even attempt to establish that the circumstances warranting a stay are present, *see New York*, 2018 WL 4279467, at \*1 (discussing the standards for a stay pending a mandamus petition), the October 12, 2018 discovery deadline is rapidly approaching and Defendants themselves have acknowledged that time is of the essence, *see id.* at \*3. Moreover, the deposition will not take place immediately; instead, Plaintiffs will need to notice it and counsel will presumably need to confer about scheduling and other logistics. In the meantime, Defendants will have ample time to seek mandamus review and a stay pending such review from the Circuit.

The Clerk of Court is directed to terminate Docket No. 314.

SO ORDERED.

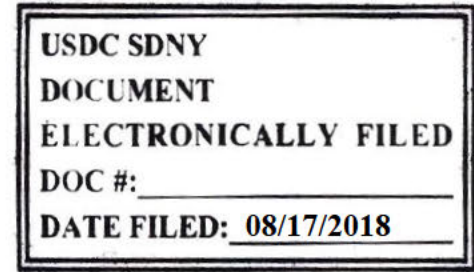
Dated: September 21, 2018  
New York, New York



---

JESSE M. FURMAN  
United States District Judge

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK



----- X  
STATE OF NEW YORK, et al.,

Plaintiff,

-v-

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, et al.,

Defendants.

----- X  
NEW YORK IMMIGRATION COALITION, et al.,

Plaintiff,

-v-

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, et al.,

Defendants.

----- X  
JESSE M. FURMAN, United States District Judge:

Two discovery-related letter motions filed by Plaintiffs in these actions in whole or in part: one filed on August 10, 2018, seeking an order compelling make John Gore, Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, available (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 236); and another filed on August 13, 2018, seeking compelling Defendants to produce “materials erroneously withheld” from the Record, (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 237).<sup>1</sup> Defendants responded in letters dated 2018. (18-CV-2921, Docket Nos. 250, 255; *see also* 18-CV-2921, Docket No.

<sup>1</sup> Plaintiffs’ August 13th letter also sought other relief, which the Court’s Order entered on August 14, 2018. (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 241).

Upon review of the parties' letters and applicable case law, the Court sees no need for a conference at this time. First, the Court grants Plaintiffs' letter motion for an order compelling Defendants to make Acting Assistant Attorney General Gore available for deposition. Given the combination of AAG Gore's apparent role in drafting the Department of Justice's December 12, 2017 letter requesting that a citizenship question be added to the decennial census and the Court's prior rulings — namely, its oral ruling of July 3rd concerning discovery, (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 207), and its Opinion of July 26th concerning Defendants' motions to dismiss (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 215, at 60-68) — his testimony is plainly "relevant," within the broad definition of that term for purposes of discovery. *See, e.g., Alaska Elec. Pension Fund v. Bank of Am. Corp.*, No. 14-CV-7126 (JMF), 2016 WL 6779901, at \*2 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 16, 2016) ("Although not unlimited, relevance, for purposes of discovery, is an extremely broad concept." (internal quotation marks omitted)). Moreover, given Plaintiffs' claim that AAG Gore "ghostwrote DOJ's December 12, 2017 letter requesting addition of the citizenship question," (Docket No. 236, at 1), the Court concludes that AAG Gore possesses relevant information that cannot be obtained from another source. *See Marisol A. v. Giuliani*, No. 95-CV-10533 (RJW), 1998 WL 132810, at \*2 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 23, 1998).

Further, the Court is unpersuaded that compelling AAG Gore to sit for a single deposition would meaningfully "hinder" him "from performing his numerous important duties," let alone "unduly burden" him or the Department of Justice (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 255, at 3), which is the relevant standard under Rule 45 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. *See, e.g., Pisani v. Westchester Cty. Health Care Corp.*, No. 05-CV-7113 (WCC), 2007 WL 107747, at \*2 (S.D.N.Y. Jan. 16, 2007) (denying a Rule 45 motion to quash subpoena, but recognizing that "special considerations arise when a party attempts to depose a high level government official").

And finally, any applicable privileges can be protected through objections to particular questions at a deposition; they do not call for precluding a deposition altogether. *See, e.g., In re Application of Chevron Corp.*, 749 F. Supp. 2d 135, 141 (S.D.N.Y. 2010) (denying motion to quash subpoenas and directing parties to make their specific objections during the deposition).

Second, Plaintiffs' request for an order compelling "production of materials erroneously withheld" is denied without prejudice. (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 237). Although the Court previously characterized Plaintiffs' allegations as "troubling" (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 241), it accepts Defendants' representations (backed by declarations from two relevant officials at the Department of Commerce) that they have now "taken all proper and reasonable steps to ensure that the administrative record and supplemental materials are complete," (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 250, at 2). If or when Plaintiffs have reason to believe otherwise, they may renew their letter motion in accordance with the Court's Individual Rules and Practices for Civil Cases and its Order of July 5th. (18-CV-2921, Docket No. 199). But there is no basis for relief now.

For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiffs' letter motion of August 10th is GRANTED to the extent it seeks an order compelling Defendants to make AAG Gore available for a deposition, and their letter motion of August 13th is DENIED to the extent it seeks an order compelling Defendants to produce "materials erroneously withheld." The Clerk of Court is directed to terminate 18-CV-2921, Docket Nos. 236 and 237, and 18-CV-5025, Docket Nos. 81 and 82.

SO ORDERED.

Dated: August 17, 2018  
New York, New York

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JESSE M. FURMAN  
United States District Judge

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
2 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

3 STATE OF NEW YORK, et al.,

4 Plaintiffs,

5 v.

18 Civ. 2921 (JMF)

6 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
7 COMMERCE, et al.,

Argument

8 Defendants.

9  
10 -----x  
11 NEW YORK IMMIGRATION  
12 COALITION, et al.,

13 Plaintiffs,

14 v.

18 Civ. 5025 (JMF)

15 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
16 COMMERCE, et al.,

Argument

17 Defendants.

18 -----x  
19  
20 New York, N.Y.  
21 July 3, 2018  
22 9:30 a.m.

23 Before:

24 HON. JESSE M. FURMAN,

25 District Judge



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

APPEARANCES

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

BY: MATTHEW COLANGELO  
AJAY P. SAINI  
ELENA S. GOLDSTEIN  
- and -

ARNOLD & PORTER KAYE SCHOLER  
BY: JOHN A. FREEDMAN  
- and -

LAW OFFICE OF ROLANDO L. RIOS  
BY: ROLANDO L. RIOS

United States Department of Justice  
Civil Division, Federal Programs Branch

Attorneys for Defendants  
BY: BRETT SHUMATE  
KATE BAILEY  
JEANNETTE VARGAS  
STEPHEN EHRLICH

1 (Case called)

2 MR. COLANGELO: Good morning, your Honor.

3 Matthew Colangelo from New York for the state and  
4 local government plaintiffs.

5 One housekeeping matter, your Honor, if I may. The  
6 plaintiffs intended to have two lawyers oppose the Justice  
7 Department's motion to dismiss; Mr. Saini argue the standing  
8 argue and Ms. Goldstein argue the remaining 12(b)(1) and  
9 12(b)(6) arguments; and then I will argue the discovery aspect  
10 of today's proceedings. And I may ask my cocounsel from  
11 Hidalgo County, Texas, Mr. Rios, to weigh in briefly on one  
12 particular aspect of expert discovery that we intend to  
13 proffer. So with the Court's indulgence, we may swap counsel  
14 in and out between those arguments.

15 THE COURT: Understood. Thank you.

16 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Elena Goldstein also from New York for  
17 the plaintiffs.

18 MR. SAINI: Ajay Saini also from New York for the  
19 plaintiffs.

20 MR. FREEDMAN: Good morning, your Honor.

21 John Freedman from Arnold & Porter for the New York  
22 Immigration Coalition plaintiffs.

23 MR. RIOS: Rolando Rios for the Cameron and Hidalgo  
24 County plaintiffs, your Honor.

25 MR. SHUMATE: Good morning, your Honor.

1           Brett Shumate from the Department of Justice on behalf  
2 of the United States. I'll be handling the motion to dismiss  
3 augment today. My colleague, Ms. Vargas, will be handling the  
4 discovery argument.

5           MS. VARGAS: Good morning, your Honor.

6           Jeannette Vargas with the U.S. Attorney's Office for  
7 the Southern District of New York.

8           MS. BAILEY: Kate Bailey with the Department of  
9 Justice on behalf of the United States.

10          MR. EHRLICH: Stephen Ehrlich from the Department of  
11 Justice on behalf of defendants.

12          THE COURT: Good morning to everybody.

13          Just a reminder and request that everybody should  
14 speak into the microphones. First of all, the acoustics in  
15 this courtroom are a little bit subpar. Second of all we're  
16 both on CourtCall so counsel who are not local can listen in  
17 and also, I don't know if there are folks in the overflow room,  
18 but in order for all of them to hear it's important that  
19 everybody speak loudly, clearly, into the microphone.

20          Before we get to the oral argument a couple  
21 housekeeping matters on my end. First, I did talk to judge  
22 Seeborg following his conference I think it was last Thursday  
23 in the California case. He mentioned that there is some new  
24 cases since the initial conference in this matter, perhaps in  
25 Maryland. Does somebody want to update me about that and tell

1 me what the status of those cases may be.

2 MS. BAILEY: There is an additional case that's been  
3 filed in Maryland, Lupe v. Ross.

4 THE COURT: What was the plaintiff's name?

5 MS. BAILEY: Lupe. L-U-P-E. That case has just been  
6 filed and a schedule has not been set yet but it is before  
7 Judge Hazel, same as the case that was already filed in  
8 Maryland.

9 THE COURT: And that raises a citizenship question  
10 challenge?

11 MS. BAILEY: Yes, your Honor.

12 THE COURT: Are there any other cases aside from that?

13 MS. BAILEY: No, your Honor.

14 THE COURT: All right. Any objection to my  
15 potentially at some point reaching out to Judge Hazel?

16 MS. BAILEY: No, your Honor.

17 THE COURT: All right.

18 I have one minor disclosure, which is that there were  
19 a number of amicus briefs filed in this case, one of which was  
20 filed on behalf of several or a number of members of Congress,  
21 one of whom was Congresswoman Maloney. My 14-year-old daughter  
22 happened to intern for her primary campaign for about a week  
23 and two days earlier this month. I did consider whether I  
24 should either reject the amicus brief or if it would warrant  
25 anything beyond that, and I did not -- I decidedly did not;

1 that disclosing it would suffice.

2 I should mention that my high school son is going to  
3 be starting as a Senate Page next week. I don't think that's  
4 affiliated with any particular senator but since several  
5 senators were on that brief as well I figured I'd mention it,  
6 but suffice it to say that their responsibilities are  
7 commensurate with their ages. Don't tell them I said that.  
8 They did not do anything in the census and will not.

9 All right. Finally, briefing in the New York  
10 Immigration Coalition case is obviously continuing. The  
11 government filed its brief last Friday. Plaintiffs will be  
12 filing their opposition by July 9. And reply is due July 13.

13 Per my order of the 27<sup>th</sup>, June 27<sup>th</sup> that is, and  
14 the plaintiffs' letter of June 29, I take it everybody's  
15 understanding is that that briefing is going to focus on  
16 arguments and issues specific to that case, and essentially the  
17 government has already incorporated by reference its arguments,  
18 to the extent they're applicable, from the states case and the  
19 plaintiffs will not be responding separately to that.

20 MR. FREEDMAN: That's correct, your Honor.

21 THE COURT: And suffice it to say that my ruling in  
22 the states case will apply to that case to the extent that  
23 there are common issues.

24 Any other preliminary matters? Otherwise, I'm  
25 prepared to jump into oral argument and we'll go from there.

1 All right. So let's do it then. I think the best way  
2 to proceed is I'm inclined to start with standing, then go  
3 to -- folks should not be using that rear door but I'll let my  
4 deputy take care of that.

5 Start with standing and then I'll hear first from  
6 defendants as the moving parties and then plaintiffs can  
7 respond. And then I want to take both the political question  
8 doctrine and the APA justiciability together. I recognize that  
9 there are discrete issues and arguments but, nevertheless,  
10 there is some thematic overlap. And then, finally, I want to  
11 take up the failure to state a claim under the enumeration  
12 clause. Candidly, I want to focus primarily on that. So in  
13 that regard I may move you a little quickly through the first  
14 preliminary arguments.

15 So Mr. Shumate, let me start with you and focus on  
16 standing in the first instance.

17 Use this microphone actually.

18 MR. SHUMATE: Good morning, your Honor. May it please  
19 the Court, Brett Shumate for the United States.

20 Congress directed the Secretary of Commerce to conduct  
21 the census in such form and content as he may determine. For  
22 the 2020 census, Commerce decided to reinstate the question  
23 about citizenship on the census questionnaire. That  
24 questionnaire already asks a number of demographic questions  
25 about race, Hispanic origin, and sex. As far back as 1820 and

1 as most recently as 2000 Commerce asked a question about  
2 citizenship on the census questionnaire.

3 THE COURT: Let me just make you cut to the chase  
4 because I got the preliminaries, I've read the briefs, I'm  
5 certainly familiar with the history, I'm familiar with your  
6 overall argument.

7 On the question of standing, let me put it to you  
8 bluntly, why is your argument not foreclosed by the Second  
9 Circuit's decision in Carey v. Klutznick?

10 MR. SHUMATE: It's not foreclosed by Carey, your  
11 Honor, because the injury in this case, the alleged injury is  
12 not fairly traceable to the government. Instead, the injury  
13 that's alleged here is the result of the independent action of  
14 third parties to make a choice not to respond to the census in  
15 violation of a legal duty to do so. That was not at issue in  
16 the Carey case. The Carey case is also distinguishable on --

17 THE COURT: So you make two distinct arguments with  
18 respect to standing. The first is that there is no injury in  
19 fact; and the second is that there is no traceability.

20 Is the injury in fact argument foreclosed by Carey v.  
21 Klutznick?

22 MR. SHUMATE: No, it's not, your Honor, for two  
23 reasons. Carey was a post-census case. So the injury there  
24 was far more concrete than it is here. Here, we're two years  
25 out from the census and the injuries that are alleged here are

1 quit speculative. They depend on a number of speculative links  
2 in the chain of causation that he we didn't have in Carey v.  
3 Klutznick.

4 First we have to speculate first about why people  
5 might not respond to the census. They might not respond for a  
6 number of reasons. Paragraphs 47 to 53 of the plaintiffs'  
7 complaint point to a number of different reasons: Distress to  
8 the government, political climate, a number of different  
9 things. But even assuming there is an increase in the -- a  
10 decrease in the initial response rate, it's speculative whether  
11 the Census Bureau's extensive efforts to follow up, what they  
12 call nonresponse follow-up operations, will fail.

13 THE COURT: Can I consider those efforts in deciding  
14 this question? Are those in the complaint? Am I not limited  
15 to the allegations in the complaint?

16 It seems to me that you're relying pretty heavily on  
17 records and issues outside of the complaint. That may well be  
18 appropriate at summary judgment and, as many of the cases  
19 you've cited are, in fact, on summary judgment. So why is that  
20 appropriate for me to look at and consider at this stage?

21 MR. SHUMATE: Your Honor, on a 12(b)(1) motion to  
22 dismiss the Court can consider evidence outside the pleadings  
23 for purposes of establishing its jurisdiction.

24 Even if you limit the allegations to the complaint,  
25 paragraph 53 makes no allegation that the Census Bureau's



1 extensive efforts that they intend to implement to follow up  
2 with individuals who may not respond to the census initially  
3 will fail.

4 And then, finally, the third element of that  
5 speculative chain of causation is that it's speculative whether  
6 any undercount that results will be material in a way that will  
7 ultimately affect the plaintiffs. As they acknowledge, there  
8 are very complex formulas to determine apportionment and  
9 federal funding. And we just don't know at this point whether  
10 any undercount will be sufficient to cause them to have an  
11 injury in 2020.

12 In Carey it was very different. It was in the census  
13 year. There were already preliminary estimates that the census  
14 figures were inaccurate because the Census Bureau was including  
15 or using inaccurate address lists in New York City. So it  
16 was -- there was a far stronger and tighter causal nexus  
17 between the alleged injury and the government's action in that  
18 case. And that case also didn't involve a question on the  
19 citizenship -- a question on the census form.

20 THE COURT: You seem to reject the substantial risk  
21 standard, citing the footnote in Clapper and suggest that it's  
22 limited to Food and Drug Administration type cases.

23 What's your authority for that proposition and don't  
24 the cases that are cited in the Clapper footnote stand for the  
25 proposition that it's not so limited?

1           MR. SHUMATE: Your Honor, I think under either  
2 standard the plaintiffs' claims will fail. I think the  
3 substantial risk test involves -- the cases that I have seen it  
4 will have involved cases involving risk of Food and Drug  
5 enforcement, or cases where there's a risk that the government  
6 may institute prosecution, something like that.

7           The far more accepted test is certainly impending  
8 injury. Either test, the plaintiffs can't show that there's a  
9 substantial risk that their injuries will ultimately occur  
10 because of these speculative chain of inferences that they have  
11 to rely on to tie the addition of a question on a form to their  
12 ultimate injury here, which is a loss of federal funding.

13           THE COURT: Are not they basing that inference on  
14 statements of the government itself and former and current  
15 government officials?

16           In other words, the government itself has said that  
17 adding a citizenship question will depress response rates.  
18 They've alleged in the complaint that there are states and  
19 counties and cities that have a high incidence of immigrants  
20 and it, therefore, would seem to follow that it would be  
21 particularly depressed in those states.

22           At this stage in the proceedings, doesn't it demand  
23 too much to expect them to be able to prove concretely what the  
24 actual differential response rate is going to be and what the  
25 concrete implications of that are going to be?

1 MR. SHUMATE: Your Honor, they don't have to prove it  
2 concretely. But those allegations that they're pointing to  
3 only go to the initial response rate.

4 There's always been an undercount in the census in  
5 terms of the initial response rate. I think in the 2010 census  
6 it was 63 percent of the individuals responded to the initial  
7 census questioning. So I think that's what the individuals --  
8 the Census Bureau are referring to, that there may be a drop in  
9 the initial response rate. But there are no allegations that  
10 the Census Bureau's follow-up operations, which are quite  
11 extensive, that those will fail. The only allegation that they  
12 pointed to, I think it is paragraph 53 of the complaint that  
13 says because of the reduced initial response rate, the Census  
14 Bureau will have to hire additional enumerators to follow up  
15 with those individuals. But it is entirely speculative whether  
16 those efforts will fail. It's also speculative, even assuming  
17 those efforts fail, whether the undercount will be material in  
18 a way that ultimately affects the plaintiffs. Because this is  
19 a pre-census case, it's not like Carey where there, like I said  
20 earlier, there were already preliminary figures suggesting that  
21 the Census Bureau had an inaccurate count in New York City.

22 THE COURT: Let me ask you about traceability. Why is  
23 that argument not foreclosed by the Circuit's decision last  
24 Friday in the NRDC v. NHTSA case. I don't know if you've seen  
25 it, but the Court held that -- rejected an argument by the

1 government that the connection between the potential industry  
2 compliance and the agency's imposition of coercive penalties  
3 intended to induce compliances too indirect to establish  
4 causation and proceeds to say: As the case law recognizes, it  
5 is well settled that for standing purposes petitioners need not  
6 prove a cause-and-effect relationship with absolute certainty.  
7 Substantial likelihood of the alleged commonality meets the  
8 test. This is true even in cases where the injury hinges on  
9 the reactions of the third parties to the agency's conduct.

10 MR. SHUMATE: I think the key is the language that you  
11 read about coercive effect. There is no coercive effect here  
12 by the government. In fact, the government is attempting to  
13 coerce people to respond to the census. There's a statute that  
14 requires individuals to respond to the census.

15 At the most what the plaintiffs have alleged is that  
16 the government's addition of the citizenship question will  
17 encouraged people not to respond to the census, even though  
18 there may be a small segment of the population who would  
19 otherwise respond not for -- putting aside the citizenship  
20 question. This is a lot more like the Simon case from 1976,  
21 which involved hospitals -- the IRS revenue ruling that granted  
22 favorable tax treatment to hospitals. The allegation in that  
23 case was that the government's decision was encouraging the  
24 hospitals to deny access to indigents to hospital services.  
25 And the Court said no, the injury in that case is not fairly

1 traceable to the government's action, even though it may have  
2 encouraged the hospitals to deny access, because it was fairly  
3 traceable to the independent decisions of third parties, the  
4 hospitals themselves.

5 That's exactly what we have here. We have an  
6 independent decision by individuals not to respond to the  
7 census. Moreover, that independent decision is unlawful  
8 because there's a statute that makes individuals -- it requires  
9 individuals to respond to the census.

10 THE COURT: Why does that matter? I think you made an  
11 effort to distinguish Rothstein on that ground, or at least the  
12 ground that the defendant's conduct in that case was allegedly  
13 unlawful and it's not here. I would think for standing  
14 purposes that that's more a merits consideration than a  
15 standing question. For standing purposes, it's really just a  
16 question of whether plaintiffs can establish injury that  
17 resulted from some conduct of the defendants, in other words,  
18 injury and causation. What does it matter if conduct is  
19 unlawful, unlawful, or not?

20 MR. SHUMATE: It matters, your Honor, because the test  
21 is that the injury must be fairly traceable to the government's  
22 conduct; not the independent actions of third parties. And it  
23 is not fair to attribute to the government the unlawful  
24 decisions of third parties not to respond to a lawful question.

25 You mentioned the Rothstein case. That case was

1 fundamentally different. That involved funding terror. That  
2 is fundamentally different than adding a question to the census  
3 questionnaire. And it's fair to assume that there would be a  
4 causal relationship between giving money to terrorists and the  
5 terrorists' acts themselves.

6 THE COURT: But the question is simply whether the  
7 independent acts of third parties intervening break the chain  
8 of causation such that it's no longer fairly traceable. I  
9 think in that -- just looking at it from that perspective, what  
10 does it matter whether the conduct on either side is legal or  
11 not legal? It's just a simple question of whether it causes  
12 injury and whether it's fairly traceable.

13 I mean, in other words where -- can you point me to  
14 any Supreme Court case or Second Circuit case that says that  
15 whether -- that the standing inquiry turns on whether the acts  
16 of either the defendant or the intervening third parties are  
17 lawful or unlawful?

18 MR. SHUMATE: There are cases. I believe it's the  
19 O'Shea case from the Supreme Court that says in the context of  
20 mootness, which is another related judicial review doctrine,  
21 that we assume that parties follow the law. And so here we  
22 should assume that individuals would respond to the census  
23 consistent with their legal duty.

24 Let me put it this way. If everybody in America  
25 responded to the census consistent with their legal duty, would

1 the plaintiffs have any reason to complain about the  
2 citizenship question? Of course not because there would be no  
3 undercount at all. Every person in America would be counted.  
4 They would have no reason to complain about the citizenship  
5 question or any fear of an undercount or loss of federal  
6 funding or apportionment.

7 Put it another way, as the Court did in Simon. If the  
8 Court were to strike the citizenship question from the census  
9 questionnaire, would that address or redress all the  
10 plaintiffs' fear of an injury? Probably not because, as they  
11 acknowledge, there's always an undercount in a census and  
12 individuals will not respond to the census questionnaire for a  
13 variety of reasons.

14 THE COURT: Well it would redress the injury to the  
15 extent that it is fairly traceable to the citizenship question.

16 MR. SHUMATE: But it is not fairly traceable to the  
17 citizen question. And the Simon Court talked about the chain,  
18 the speculative chain of inferences that you had to reach in  
19 that case to trace the injury from the government's action to  
20 the ultimate injury. And here there are at least three steps  
21 in the chain of causation. I've talked about them already. I  
22 don't need to repeat them.

23 THE COURT: Let me ask you one final question on that  
24 front and then I'll hear from the plaintiffs on standing.

25 You rely pretty heavily on the Supreme Court's

1 decision in Clapper and the chain of causation or the chain of  
2 inferences that the Court found inadequate there. Isn't there  
3 a fundamental difference between that setting and this in the  
4 sense that the plaintiffs there were individuals and  
5 essentially needed to prove that they themselves had been  
6 subjected to surveillance and it was that inquiry that required  
7 the multiple levels of inferences that the Court found  
8 inadequate?

9 Here, particularly in the states case where the  
10 plaintiffs are states and cities and counties and the like,  
11 we're talking about an aggregate plaintiff. So there is no  
12 need to prove that a particular person didn't respond or is not  
13 likely to respond to the census in light of question. The  
14 question is just, on an aggregate level, will it depress the  
15 rates and on that presumably one can look at the Census  
16 Bureau's own history and studies and the like. Why is that not  
17 fundamentally different and make it a different inquiry than  
18 the one that was made in Clapper?

19 MR. SHUMATE: Certainly the injuries alleged in  
20 Clapper and this case are different but the standing principles  
21 are not. They still have to allege an injury that is not  
22 speculative, that is concrete certainly, or at least  
23 substantial risk that that injury will occur. Now this arises  
24 in a different context, to be sure, but still they have alleged  
25 an injury that is speculative at this point, and it is not



1 fairly traceable to the government because of the independent  
2 action of the third parties that are necessary for that action  
3 to occur. As I said earlier, it's not fair to attribute to the  
4 government actions of third parties that violate a statute that  
5 the government is attempting to coerce people to respond to the  
6 census. So it is not fair to attribute to the government their  
7 failure to respond when the government is merely adding a  
8 question to the form itself.

9 THE COURT: Let me hear from the plaintiffs on the  
10 standing, please. If you could just for the record make sure  
11 your repeat your names.

12 MR. SAINI: Your Honor, Ajay Saini from the State of  
13 New York for the plaintiffs.

14 THE COURT: Proceed.

15 MR. SAINI: Your Honor, the plaintiffs intend to make  
16 two points here today. First, that the injuries that they have  
17 alleged are not speculative and, in fact, the plaintiffs'  
18 action here, the inclusion of citizenship question on the 2020  
19 census, creates a substantial risk of an undercount and poses a  
20 serious threat to plaintiffs' funding levels as well as  
21 apportionment and representational interests; and our second  
22 point that the plaintiffs' injuries are in fact fairly  
23 traceable to the defendants' actions.

24 THE COURT: Does your argument depend on my accepting  
25 that the substantial risk standard is still alive and not

1 inconsistent with certainly impending.

2 MR. SAINI: No, your Honor. We believe that there are  
3 immediate injuries that have occurred here. We have alleged  
4 that at paragraph 53 and -- 52 and 53 in which we state that  
5 the announcement of the citizenship question has an immediate  
6 deterrent effect and is already causing individuals to choose  
7 not to, in anticipation of the census, not cooperate. But that  
8 said, the substantial risk standard was affirmed just two years  
9 ago in Susan B. Anthony List v. Driehaus and as a result -- by  
10 the Supreme Court, and as a result the substantial risk  
11 standard is available here.

12 Your Honor the plaintiffs' injuries here are not  
13 speculative. First and foremost, the plaintiffs have shown  
14 that there is a substantial risk that an undercount will occur  
15 and the statements by the defendants over the last 40 years,  
16 the repeated determination by the Census Bureau that a  
17 citizenship question will, in fact, increase nonresponse, and  
18 not only increase nonresponse, but those determinations also  
19 include in the statements that a citizenship question would  
20 deter cooperation with enumerators going door to door seeking  
21 to count nonresponsive households is sufficient to find that  
22 there is a substantial risk of undercounting here.

23 The defendants have mischaracterized paragraph 53 of  
24 our complaint. We have, in fact, alleged that typical forms of  
25 nonresponse follow-up will be ineffective at capturing

1 individuals who are intimidated by the citizenship question.  
2 And the typical form of nonresponse follow-up there is the use  
3 of enumerators going door to door. And, again, Census Bureau's  
4 longstanding determinations on this serve as sufficient proof  
5 to show that, in fact, the nonresponse follow-up operations --  
6 that there is a substantial risk that they will be effective.  
7 In addition, your Honor this is -- we are still at the  
8 beginning stage of this litigation and to the extent that we  
9 need to determine whether or not some unspecified nonresponse  
10 follow-up operations will somehow reduce potential undercount,  
11 that would require further factual development at later stages  
12 of the litigation.

13 THE COURT: Your view is that, therefore, I cannot or  
14 should not consider the government's announced procedures and  
15 plans on that front?

16 MR. SAINI: You need not consider it, your Honor, but  
17 even if you were to consider it these unspecified allegations  
18 regarding nonresponse follow-up would not be enough to defeat  
19 the plaintiffs' claim that there is, in fact, a substantial  
20 risk of an undercount here.

21 THE COURT: What's your answer to the argument that  
22 there are multiple other steps in the chain of inferences that  
23 are required for you to intervene including, for example, that  
24 it will affect the counts in your geographic jurisdiction  
25 disproportionately given the complex formulas at issue here for

1 appportionment, for funding, etc., essentially it's too  
2 speculative to know whether and to what extent it will have an  
3 effect and that ultimately you also need to prove that it has a  
4 material effect on those?

5 MR. SAINI: Your Honor, first we would note that we  
6 are at the pleading stage here so we do not need to determine  
7 with certainty the exact level of injury that we expect to  
8 suffer, if we do intend to provide further factual development  
9 in the form of expert and fact discovery to help further  
10 elucidate the injuries that we expect to result.

11 But more importantly, your Honor, there is plenty of  
12 case law relating to -- from here in the Second Circuit  
13 relating to the viability of funding harms from undercounts  
14 such as in Carey v. Klutznick, for instance, the Court  
15 recognized that funding harms were sufficient to establish  
16 Article III standing on the basis of plaintiffs' State and City  
17 of New York's claims that an undercount would affect their  
18 federal formula grants. And, similarly, the Sixth Circuit  
19 found in the City of Detroit v. Franklin that undercounting  
20 would affect potential funding under the Community Development  
21 Block Grant Program which we also have alleged in our  
22 complaint.

23 The last thing to note here --

24 THE COURT: Can I ask you a question. Mr. Shumate's  
25 argument is that Carey is different because it's a post-census

1 case and not a pre-census case and in that regard it didn't  
2 involve the same degree of speculation with respect to there  
3 being an undercount. What's your answer to that?

4 MR. SAINI: Our answer to that, your Honor, is, again,  
5 plaintiffs here -- the defendants here have repeatedly  
6 recognized that a citizenship question will impair the accuracy  
7 of the census both by driving down response rates but also by  
8 deterring cooperation with enumerators. That specific fact of  
9 government acknowledgment that this causal connection exists  
10 and that there's a substantial likelihood that a citizenship  
11 question will result in undercounts is significant here.

12 In addition, we have also pointed to, in the complaint  
13 at paragraphs 50 and 51, the results of pretesting conducted by  
14 the Census Bureau which shows unprecedented levels of immigrant  
15 anxiety. That pretesting also reveals that immigrant  
16 households, noncitizen households are increasingly breaking off  
17 interviews with Census Bureau officials. The results of that  
18 pretesting show that not only is there a substantial likelihood  
19 of an undercount here but there's a substantial likelihood of a  
20 serious undercount here. That's more than enough for  
21 plaintiffs to meet their burden.

22 THE COURT: And presumably those allegations are  
23 relevant to the question of whether the in-person enumerator  
24 follow-up would suffice to address any disparity; is that  
25 correct?

1 MR. SAINI: Yes, your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Can you turn to the question of  
3 traceability and address that. The language in the cases  
4 suggest that the intervening acts of third parties don't  
5 necessarily break the chain of causation if there is a coercive  
6 or determinative effect. I think the government's argument  
7 here is that there is no coercive effect. In fact, to the  
8 extent that the government coerces anything, it coerces people  
9 to respond to the census because it's their lawful obligation  
10 to do so.

11 So why is that not compelling argument?

12 MR. SAINI: Your Honor, the courts have repeatedly  
13 acknowledged, including the Second Circuit just last week in  
14 NRDC v. NHTSA that the government's acknowledgment of a causal  
15 connection between their action and the plaintiffs' injury is  
16 sufficient to find that the defendants' injury -- the  
17 plaintiffs' injury is fairly traceable to the defendants'  
18 conduct and that case law is sufficient to address this  
19 particular point.

20 With respect to the illegality point that the  
21 defendants have brought up here, we would point first to  
22 Rothstein which shows that the illegal intervening actions of a  
23 third party do not break the line of causation.

24 In addition, your Honor, while we haven't cited this  
25 in our papers because this point was first brought up and

1 explored in a reply brief, there are a line of cases relating  
2 to data breaches, including in the D.C. Circuit, Attias v.  
3 CareFirst, in which plaintiffs' injuries related to identity  
4 theft, were fairly traceable to a company's lack of consumer  
5 information data security policies in spite of the intervening  
6 illegal action of the third parties, namely the hackers  
7 stealing that confidential information.

8 THE COURT: Can you give me that citation?

9 MR. SAINI: I can give that to you -- it's in my bag,  
10 so I will give that to you shortly. Apologize about that.

11 THE COURT: All right. Very good. Why don't you wrap  
12 up on standing and we'll turn to the political question and APA  
13 question.

14 MR. SAINI: One last note on standing, your Honor.  
15 The plaintiff need only show that one city, state, or county  
16 within their coalition has Article III standing to satisfy the  
17 Article III requirement for the entire coalition. As a result,  
18 it's more than plausible to include that at least one of the  
19 cities, states and counties that we have alleged harms for  
20 related to funding and apportionment are likely and  
21 substantial -- at a substantial risk of harm here.

22 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

23 MR. SAINI: Thank you, your Honor.

24 THE COURT: Mr. Shumate, back to you. Mr. Saini can  
25 look for that cite in the meantime.

1           Talk to me about political question and the APA and,  
2 once again, my question to you is why are those arguments not  
3 foreclosed by Carey v. Klutznick?

4           MR. SHUMATE: Your Honor, even assuming the plaintiffs  
5 have standing the case is not reviewable for two reasons: One,  
6 the political question doctrine, the second --

7           THE COURT: You have to slow down a little bit.

8           MR. SHUMATE: The APA is not reviewable because this  
9 matter is committed to the agency's discretion.

10           With respect to Carey, again, that case did not  
11 involve the addition of the question on the census  
12 questionnaire. There was very little analysis of the political  
13 question doctrine in that case. So it's hard to view that case  
14 as foreclosing the arguments we're making here.

15           THE COURT: But I don't understand you to be arguing  
16 that the decision with respect to the questions on the  
17 questionnaire is a political question and other aspects of the  
18 census are not political questions, or is that your argument?  
19 And to the extent that is your argument, where do you find  
20 support for that in the text of the enumeration clause?

21           MR. SHUMATE: So our argument is that the manner of  
22 conducting the census is committed to Congress, and Congress  
23 has committed that to the Secretary of Commerce. So to be sure  
24 there have been cases reviewing census decisions but those have  
25 been decisions involving how to count, who to count, things



1 like that, should we use imputation --

2 THE COURT: Isn't that the manner in which the census  
3 is conducted?

4 MR. SHUMATE: No. Those go squarely to the question  
5 of whether there's going to be a person-by-person headcount of  
6 every individual in America. That is the actual enumeration.  
7 So in those cases there was law to apply. There was a  
8 meaningful standard. Is there going to be an actual  
9 enumeration?

10 This case is fundamentally different. This doesn't  
11 implicate those issues how to count, who to count. It  
12 implicates the Secretary's information gathering functions that  
13 are pre-census itself. And there is simply no case that  
14 addresses that question or decides -- or says that it's not a  
15 political question.

16 THE COURT: Can you cite any case that has projected  
17 challenges to the census on the political question grounds?

18 MR. SHUMATE: No, there haven't been any cases like  
19 this one where a plaintiff is challenging the addition of a  
20 question to the census questionnaire itself. There have been  
21 cases --

22 THE COURT: You're telling me in the two hundred plus  
23 years of the census and the pretty much every ten-year cycle of  
24 litigation arising over it there has never been a challenge to  
25 the manner in which the census has been conducted; this is the

1 first one?

2 MR. SHUMATE: There has never been a challenge like  
3 this one to the addition of a question on the census  
4 questionnaire.

5 THE COURT: So it is specific to the addition of a  
6 question then.

7 MR. SHUMATE: Right. Right. So there have been  
8 cases --

9 THE COURT: In other words, that's the level on which  
10 I should look at whether it's a political question and the  
11 question -- literally adding the question is itself a political  
12 question. That's your argument?

13 MR. SHUMATE: Right. You don't need to go any further  
14 than that. Because our argument is that the Secretary's  
15 choice, or Congress's choice of which questions to ask on the  
16 census questionnaire is a political question. It is a value  
17 judgment and a policy judgment about what statistical  
18 information the government should collect. And there are no  
19 judicially manageable standards that the court can apply to  
20 decide whether that's a reasonable choice or not.

21 THE COURT: Why isn't the standard, and this becomes  
22 relevant to the issues we'll discuss later, why isn't the  
23 standard the one from the Supreme Court's decision in Wisconsin  
24 v. City of New York that it has to be reasonably related to the  
25 accomplishment of an actual enumeration? Why is that not the

1 standard and why is that not judicially manageable?

2 MR. SHUMATE: Because that case implicated the actual  
3 enumeration question. So there is a standard as to decide  
4 whether the Secretary's actions are intended to count every  
5 person in America. But that's not this case.

6 THE COURT: Isn't that the ultimate purpose of the  
7 census?

8 MR. SHUMATE: That is the ultimate purpose of the  
9 census, but the manner of conducting the census itself, the  
10 information-gathering function in particular is a political  
11 question. There is simply no law that the Court can find in  
12 the Constitution to decide whether the government should  
13 collect this type of information or that type of information.

14 THE COURT: So is it your argument that if the  
15 Secretary decided to add a question to the questionnaire that  
16 asks who you voted for in the last presidential election, that  
17 that would be unreviewable by a court?

18 MR. SHUMATE: It would be reviewable by Congress but  
19 not a court. That demonstrates why this is a political  
20 question, because Congress has reserved for itself the right to  
21 review the questions.

22 Two years before the census the Secretary has to  
23 submit the questions to Congress. If Congress doesn't like the  
24 questions, the Congress can call the Secretary to the Hill and  
25 berate him over that; or they can pass a statute and say no,

1 we're going to ask these questions. That's how the census used  
2 to be conducted. It used to be that statutory decision about  
3 which questions to ask on the census. But Congress has now  
4 delegated that discretion to the Secretary. But ultimately it  
5 is still a political question about the manner of conducting  
6 the census that is committed to the political branches.

7 THE COURT: What if the Secretary added a question  
8 that was specifically designed to depress the count in states  
9 that -- we live in a world of red states and blue states.  
10 Let's assume for the sake of argument that the White House and  
11 Congress are both controlled by the same party. Let's call it  
12 blue for now. And let's assume that the Secretary adds a  
13 question that is intended to and will have the predictable  
14 effect of depressing the count in red states and red states  
15 only. Again, don't resist the hypothetical. Your argument is  
16 that that's reviewable only by Congress and even if Congress,  
17 even if there's a political breakdown and basically Congress is  
18 not prepared to do anything about that question, that question  
19 is not reviewable by a court?

20 MR. SHUMATE: Correct. Because it is a decision about  
21 which question to ask. It wouldn't matter what the intent was  
22 behind the addition of the question. It's fundamentally  
23 different than a question, like the courts have reviewed in  
24 other cases, about who to count, how to count, things like  
25 that, should we count overseas federal employees. That's a

1 judicially manageable question. We can decide whether those  
2 individuals should be counted or not. It's different than  
3 whether sampling procedures should be allowed because it  
4 implicates the count itself. This is the pre-count  
5 information-gathering function that is committed to the  
6 political branches.

7 THE COURT: A lot of your argument turns on accepting  
8 that the plaintiffs' challenges to the manner in which the  
9 census is conducted as opposed to the enumeration component of  
10 the clause. Isn't the gravamen of the plaintiffs' claim here  
11 that by virtue of adding the question it will depress the count  
12 and therefore interfere with the actual enumeration required by  
13 the clause?

14 MR. SHUMATE: They're trying to make an actual  
15 enumeration claim, but their factual allegations don't  
16 implicate that clause of the Constitution at all because what  
17 they're challenge is the manner in which the Secretary conducts  
18 the information-gathering function delegated to him by  
19 Congress.

20 So there is no allegation in the complaint, for  
21 example, that the Secretary had not put in place procedures to  
22 count every person in America. I think they would have to  
23 concede that the Secretary has those procedures in place and  
24 intends to count every person in America.

25 Now they argue that -- I will get to this later --

1 they argue that the question will depress the count itself.  
2 But that would lead down a road where they can -- plaintiffs  
3 could challenge the font of the form itself, the size of the  
4 form, whether it should be put on the internet, or the other  
5 questions on the form itself: Race, sex, Hispanic origin.  
6 These are matters that are committed to the Secretary's  
7 discretion for himself.

8 THE COURT: That may be committed to his discretion  
9 but that's a different question than whether they're completely  
10 unreviewable by a court, correct?

11 In other words, it may well be that there's a place  
12 for courts to review the decisions of the Secretary but giving  
13 appropriate deference to those decisions? Isn't that a  
14 fundamental distinction?

15 MR. SHUMATE: That is correct, your Honor. Even if  
16 you assume that it is not a political question, the court would  
17 still -- should grant significant deference to the Secretary if  
18 the court gets to the enumeration clause claim.

19 THE COURT: Let's talk about the APA argument and  
20 whether it's committed to the discretion of the agency by law.

21 Can you cite any authority for the proposition that a  
22 census decision is so committed or is your point that this case  
23 has never -- this is an issue of first impression effectively?

24 MR. SHUMATE: The later point, your Honor. This is a  
25 question of first impression. However, Webster v. Doe, a

1 Supreme Court case, involved similar statutory language. I'll  
2 read that language. It said --

3 THE COURT: How do you square that with Justice  
4 Stevens' concurring opinion in Franklin where he essentially  
5 distinguished Webster on several grounds?

6 MR. SHUMATE: He did not get a majority of the Court,  
7 your Honor, so it wouldn't be controlling.

8 THE COURT: I understand that. I'm not controlled by  
9 it. But on the merits, tell me why he is not right.

10 In other words, the language in Webster was deemed  
11 advisable. That's not the language here. The structure of the  
12 Act at issue in Webster and the purpose of the Act, namely  
13 national security, implicated fairly significant considerations  
14 that are absent here. Here, there's an interest in  
15 transparency and the like that was absent or the exact opposite  
16 in Webster.

17 MR. SHUMATE: I respectfully disagree. To be sure, Webster  
18 Webster involved national security where the courts have  
19 historically deferred significantly to the political branches.  
20 But so have courts also deferred to political branches when it  
21 comes to the census. The Wisconsin case from the Supreme Court  
22 makes that quite clear.

23 THE COURT: But holds that it's reviewable.

24 MR. SHUMATE: A case involving the actual enumeration  
25 question, not a case involving the Secretary's

1 information-gathering function.

2 And I think we need to focus on the specific language  
3 of the statute itself, which was not involved -- not at issue  
4 in Franklin, did not involve a question about what questions to  
5 ask on the form.

6 The statute here says: Congress has delegated to the  
7 Commerce the responsibility to conduct a census, quote, in such  
8 form and content as he may determine.

9 THE COURT: Slow down.

10 MR. SHUMATE: Such form and content as he may  
11 determine. As he may determine. That is very similar to the  
12 language in Webster, that he deems advisable.

13 So there is simply nothing in the statute itself that  
14 a court can point to, to decide whether it's reasonable to ask  
15 one question or another because the statute says he has -- the  
16 Secretary himself has the discretion to decide the form and  
17 content of the census questionnaire itself.

18 THE COURT: I take it that language was added to the  
19 statute in 1976; is that right?

20 MR. SHUMATE: I'm sorry. I don't understand.

21 THE COURT: That language was added to the statute in  
22 1976?

23 MR. SHUMATE: I think the statute I'm pointing to is a  
24 1980 statute, Section 141 of the census, because it says the  
25 Secretary shall conduct the census in 1980 and years -- so



1 perhaps --

2 THE COURT: Probably passed before 1980.

3 MR. SHUMATE: Right. Right.

4 THE COURT: Is there anything in the legislative  
5 history that you're aware of that suggests that Congress  
6 intended to render the Secretary's decisions on that score  
7 totally unreviewable?

8 MR. SHUMATE: I'm not aware of any legislative  
9 history, your Honor, on this question about whether courts  
10 should be permitted to review the Secretary's choice of which  
11 questions to ask on the census.

12 THE COURT: All right. Very good. Anything else on  
13 these two points? Otherwise I'll hear from plaintiffs.

14 MR. SHUMATE: I don't think so, your Honor.

15 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

16 Good morning.

17 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Good morning, your Honor.

18 Elena Goldstein for the plaintiffs. Before I begin,  
19 your Honor, I do have that citation that my colleague  
20 referenced. Attias v. CareFirst, Inc. That is 865 F.3d 620.

21 THE COURT: Thank you.

22 MS. GOLDSTEIN: That was from 2017.

23 THE COURT: You may proceed.

24 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, your Honor.

25 Before I get to the heart of defendants' arguments, I

1 want to address this decision that they've made to get very  
2 granular with respect to the question, with respect to the  
3 exact conduct of the Secretary here.

4 The defendants contend repeatedly that this is a case  
5 of first impression and that no case has ever challenged a  
6 question on the census. That fact highlights the extreme and  
7 outlandish nature of defendants' conduct here.

8 If you look at the wide number of census cases that  
9 are out there, that I know we've all been looking at, there's a  
10 common theme. And the common theme is that the Census Bureau  
11 and the Secretary aim for accuracy.

12 If you look at the Wisconsin case, there the Secretary  
13 determined not to adjust the census using a post-enumeration  
14 survey had some science on his side. The Court says the  
15 Secretary is trying to be more accurate, has some science, we  
16 will defer. Utah v. Evans is similar. The determination to  
17 use a type of statistic known as hot-deck imputation, the  
18 Secretary says we're trying to be more accurate, we will defer.

19 This case turns that factual predicate on its head and  
20 in a most unusual way. Instead of the Secretary aiming for  
21 accuracy, the Secretary here has acknowledged that he's  
22 actually moving in the opposite direction.

23 THE COURT: So let's say I agree with you. Why under  
24 the language of the clause and the language of the statute is  
25 that not a matter for Congress to deal with?

1 Congress has required the Secretary to report to  
2 Congress the questions that he intends to ask sufficiently in  
3 advance of the census that Congress could act, that the  
4 democratic process could run its course. Why is that not the  
5 answer instead of having a court intervene?

6 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, defendants confuse the  
7 grant of authority to Congress for a grant of sole and  
8 unreviewable authority. They draw this -- there's a vast  
9 number of cases out there that are holding, as the Court has  
10 noted, that these census cases are not, in fact, political  
11 questions. So in order to distinguish between all of those  
12 cases and this one case that defendants argue is not  
13 justiciable defendants proffer this novel distinction between  
14 the manner of the headcount and the headcount itself. But that  
15 distinction is a false dichotomy that collapses on further  
16 review. In many cases, including this one, the manner of the  
17 headcount absolutely impacts the obligation to count to begin  
18 with. In this case plaintiffs have specifically alleged that  
19 defendants' decision to demand citizenship information from all  
20 persons will reduce the accuracy of the enumeration. That is,  
21 in defendant's effective parlance, a counting violating. And  
22 it's easy to think of many other examples in which the manner  
23 of the headcount is absolutely bound up in the headcount  
24 obligation itself. For example, the decision, as defendants  
25 point out, between Times New Roman and Garamond font, likely

1 within the government's discretion. But the decision to put  
2 the questionnaire in size two Garamond font that's unreadable,  
3 for example, on the questionnaire, that would be certainly a  
4 decision that would impact the accuracy of the enumeration.  
5 The decision to send out all the questionnaires in French would  
6 impact the accuracy of the enumeration.

7 THE COURT: Right. But not every problem warrants or  
8 even allows for a judicial solution, right. Indeed the Supreme  
9 Court said as much last week in some cases, like why is the  
10 remedy there not Congress stepping in and taking care of that  
11 problem, mandating that it be distributed in 17 languages  
12 instead of one, mandating that it be in twelve-point font, etc.

13 Why is a court to supervise, at that level of  
14 granularity, the Secretary's conduct that is committed to him  
15 by statute?

16 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, defendants' political  
17 question argument depends on this manner versus headcount  
18 distinction. They acknowledge that everything else courts can  
19 review, not review on that granular level but review under  
20 Wisconsin to affirm that the Secretary's decision bears a  
21 reasonable relationship to the accomplishment of an  
22 enumeration.

23 Courts do not analyze cases in this fashion. The  
24 starting point, as the Court has recognized, is Carey. This is  
25 a case that is, I think by any fair reading, a manner case. It

1 involved the adequacy of address registers. It involved the  
2 adequacy of enumerators going out. The Court there holds  
3 squarely that this is not a political question.

4 And looking at even Wisconsin, your Honor, the Court  
5 there recognized that the Secretary's discretion to not adjust  
6 the census in that case arises out of the manner language of  
7 the statute.

8 Virtually every court to consider this issue has held  
9 the fact that Congress has authority over the census does not  
10 mean that that is sole or unreviewable authority.

11 THE COURT: What is the judicially manageable standard  
12 to use?

13 The defendants throw out some hypotheticals as to  
14 whether it would constitute a violation of the -- let me put it  
15 differently.

16 Is the standard the pursuing accuracy standard that  
17 you articulate in your brief and to some extent you've  
18 articulated here?

19 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Yes, your Honor.

20 I think that the baseline standard is the standard in  
21 Wisconsin, that defendants are obligated to take decisions that  
22 bear a reasonable relationship to the accomplishment of an  
23 actual enumeration, and accomplishing an actual enumeration  
24 means trying to get that count done, which means pursuing  
25 accuracy. Whatever the outer limits of that decision may be,

1 your Honor, it is not taking decisions that affirmatively  
2 undermine that enumeration.

3 THE COURT: So defendants cite a number of  
4 hypotheticals in their reply brief, for example, the question  
5 of whether to hire 550 as opposed to 600,000 in-person  
6 enumerators; the question of whether to put it in 12 languages  
7 versus 13 languages.

8 Is it your position that those aren't reviewable but  
9 presumably acceptable on the merits or -- I mean what's your  
10 position on those?

11 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Yes, your Honor.

12 The vast majority of those kinds of decisions made by  
13 the Secretary are well within the bound of the discretion  
14 that's laid out in Wisconsin. But as you push those examples  
15 further, the decision to send 500 enumerators versus 450,  
16 clearly within the Secretary's discretion. Both accomplish an  
17 actual enumeration and are calculated to do so.

18 But the decision to send no enumerators or no  
19 enumerators to a particular state, that begins to look more  
20 questionable as to whether or not that decision would bear a  
21 reasonable relationship to accomplish an enumeration and, under  
22 defendants', theory would be entirely unreviewable.

23 THE COURT: Turning to the APA question, I think you  
24 rely in part on the mandatory language in some places in the  
25 census act. There is no question that the Act mandates that

1 the Secretary do X, Y, and Z but the relevant clause here would  
2 seem to be the permissive one, namely, in such form and content  
3 as he may determine.

4 So why are the mandatory aspects of the Act even  
5 relevant to the question of whether it's committed to agency  
6 discretion?

7 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, with respect to the plain  
8 language of the Census Act, I would argue that Section 5 which  
9 directs the Secretary to determine the question -- the  
10 mandatory language directs the Secretary to determine the  
11 questions and inquiries on the census is more specific than the  
12 form and content language that even arguably is permissive in  
13 Section 141.

14 In addition, as plaintiffs have noted in that their  
15 papers, there are multiple sources for law to apply in this  
16 case, both from those mandatory requirements of the Census Act  
17 from the constitutional purposes undergirding the census, the  
18 Constitution and the Census Act, and the wide array of  
19 administrative guidance out there dictating specifically how  
20 the Census Bureau has and does add questions to the decennial  
21 questionnaire. In light of that mosaic of law, there is no  
22 question that the vast majority of courts to consider this  
23 question have concluded that challenges to the census are  
24 reviewable, that there is law to apply.

25 THE COURT: And to the extent that you rely on the

1 Census Bureau's own guidance, don't those policy statements  
2 have to be binding in order to provide law to apply?

3 MS. GOLDSTEIN: No, your Honor. The starting point  
4 here -- so defendants are arguing that there is no law to apply  
5 at all. And the Second Circuit in the Salazar case makes very  
6 clear that the Court can look to informal agency guidance to  
7 determine whether or not there is law to apply.

8 In Salazar the Court was looking to dear-colleague  
9 letters that no one alleged gave rise to a finding of a private  
10 right of action. But at the same time those dear-colleague  
11 letters, in conjunction with other law out there, formed the  
12 basis for agency practices and procedures that departures  
13 therefrom could be judged to be arbitrary or capricious.

14 So, too, in this case. Plaintiffs have identified a  
15 wide arrange of policies and practices and procedural guidance  
16 dictating the many testing requirements that questions are  
17 typically held to and required to go through prior to being  
18 added to the decennial census the defendants have entirely  
19 ignored here. I'm happy to distinguish the cases that  
20 defendants have cited if the Court would like me to continue on  
21 this.

22 THE COURT: No. I think I'd like to turn to the  
23 enumeration clause issue at this point.

24 Mr. Shumate, you're back up.

25 MR. SHUMATE: Thank you, your Honor.



1           THE COURT: Do you agree that the relevant standard  
2 comes from Wisconsin is the reasonably related or reasonable  
3 relationship to the accomplishment of an actual enumeration  
4 that that is the guiding standard here?

5           MR. SHUMATE: I think that would be the guiding  
6 standard in a case involving a question over whether the  
7 Secretary has procedures in place to conduct an actual  
8 enumeration, but that is not this case. This is a case  
9 involving the information-gathering function that takes place  
10 during the census. And there is no standard to apply.

11           THE COURT: What is the authority -- Ms. Goldstein  
12 just argued that it's a false dichotomy and a false distinction  
13 that you're trying to draw between the manner and the  
14 enumeration. I mean it seems to me that there is some -- it's  
15 hard to draw that -- a clear distinction in the sense that  
16 clearly the manner in which the Secretary conducts the census  
17 will determine, in many instances, whether it actually is an  
18 accurate actual enumeration.

19           So are there cases that you can point to that draw  
20 that distinction and indicate that it is as bright line as  
21 you're suggesting?

22           MR. SHUMATE: I can't, your Honor, because frankly  
23 there hasn't been a case like this one involving the facial  
24 challenge to the addition of a question itself. But even  
25 assuming that is the standard, there's nothing in the

1 Constitution that forecloses the Secretary from asking this  
2 questions on the census questionnaire. There is no allegation  
3 that the Secretary doesn't have procedures in place to conduct  
4 person-by-person headcount in the United States. And as the  
5 Secretary said in his memo at pages one and eight, he intends,  
6 again, procedures in place to make every effort to conduct a  
7 complete and accurate census. So they're not challenging the  
8 procedures themselves. They're not challenging the follow-up  
9 operations. They're just challenging the addition of a  
10 question itself.

11 THE COURT: What about the hypothetical that the  
12 Secretary decides to send in-person enumerators only to states  
13 in certain regions of the country. Why would that not be a  
14 violation of the enumeration clause?

15 MR. SHUMATE: I think that would be, first of all, a  
16 very different case, but there may be a valid claim there if  
17 the Secretary had not put in place procedures to count every  
18 person in the United States.

19 THE COURT: Procedures sounds an awful lot like  
20 manner, no? In other words, why is that not a manner case as  
21 well that ultimately goes to the enumeration?

22 MR. SHUMATE: Because it implicates the count itself.  
23 It's not the questions on the form itself that are used to  
24 collect the information to count itself. So it's a  
25 fundamentally different situation.

1           But, again, they don't have those allegations in the  
2 complaint here that the number of enumerators are insufficient.  
3 The only challenge here is to the addition of a question  
4 itself.

5           We can't ignore the fact that this question has been  
6 asked repeatedly throughout our history, as early as 1820 and  
7 as most recently as the 2000 census. And as the Wisconsin  
8 Court made clear, history is fundamentally important in a  
9 census case because the government has been doing this since  
10 1790.

11           THE COURT: I take it your view is I can consider that  
12 history on a 12(b)(6) motion because there are undisputed  
13 facts, essentially historical facts.

14           MR. SHUMATE: Historical facts that take judicial  
15 notice of the fact that the question has been asked repeatedly  
16 throughout history.

17           THE COURT: Why does history not cut in both  
18 directions in the sense that the question was abandoned from  
19 the short-form census since 1950; in other words, for the last  
20 68 years it has not been a part of the census.

21           MR. SHUMATE: It has been part of the long-form census  
22 which went to one in six households, and those households  
23 didn't get the short form. So under their view it was  
24 unconstitutional for the government to send the long-form  
25 census to one in six houses, it was unconstitutional for the

1 government to ask this question in 1950 and in 1820, and that  
2 cannot possibly be right.

3 Let me address their point about the standard is  
4 accuracy, the Secretary has to do everything to pursue  
5 accuracy. That can't possibly be the standard. It's a made-up  
6 standard. It doesn't come from the cases. And it's simply  
7 unworkable.

8 On this question of the font on the form itself.  
9 There's nothing for the court to evaluate to decide whether  
10 that would be a permissible choice or not. It would give rise  
11 to courts second guessing everything that the Secretary does to  
12 collect the information for the census. And that's -- it's  
13 simply not a case where the allegations implicate the  
14 procedures that are in place to count every person in America;  
15 instead this is case implicating the information-gathering  
16 function.

17 THE COURT: Now in United States v. Rickenbacker,  
18 Justice Marshall, for whom this courthouse is named, wrote  
19 that, "The authority to gather reliable statistical data  
20 reasonably related to governmental purposes and functions is a  
21 necessity if modern government is to legislate intelligently  
22 and effectively. The questions contained in the household  
23 questionnaire related to important federal concerns such as  
24 housing, labor and health and were not unduly broad or sweeping  
25 in their scope."

1           Now admittedly that was in the context of a Fourth  
2 Amendment challenge to a criminal prosecution of someone who  
3 refused to respond to the census. But why is that not the  
4 relevant standard here?

5           It seems to me that the census's dual purpose, I  
6 think, has always been about getting an accurate count for  
7 purposes of allocating seats in the House of Representatives,  
8 but from time immemorial it seems that it also was used to  
9 collect data on those living in this country and that that has  
10 been deemed an acceptable, indeed, important function of it.

11           So why is that not a sensible standard to apply here?

12           MR. SHUMATE: Your Honor, it may be. But if that's  
13 the standard, there is no reason that the addition of a  
14 citizenship question would run afoul of that standard.

15           Again, the question has been asked repeatedly.

16           THE COURT: First of all, two questions. One is  
17 doesn't that provide a judicially manageable standard? Again,  
18 recognizing the deference of it to the Secretary on his  
19 judgments with respect to it, but at least it is a standard  
20 against which the Secretary's judgments can be measured, no?

21           MR. SHUMATE: I don't know where that standard comes  
22 from, your Honor. It certainly doesn't come from --

23           THE COURT: Thurgood Marshall.

24           MR. SHUMATE: That doesn't come from the Constitution,  
25 because the Constitution simply says the manner of conducting

1 the census. The plaintiffs are right. That's not the standard  
2 that the plaintiffs are pressing. They're pressing the  
3 standard that the Secretary has to do everything to pursue  
4 accuracy. And if that's right, then the plaintiff can claim  
5 that the questions about race and sex and Hispanic origin are  
6 also unconstitutional.

7 THE COURT: But you don't make the argument that  
8 that's the relevant standard to apply in your brief?

9 MR. SHUMATE: No, your Honor. The standard to apply,  
10 if there is one, is actual enumeration. And the plaintiffs  
11 haven't made any allegations that the Secretary does not have  
12 procedures in place to conduct an actual enumeration.

13 THE COURT: And the purposes for which the question  
14 was added, obviously in the Administrative Record the stated  
15 purpose was to enforce -- help enforce the Voting Rights Act.  
16 Are there additional purposes that would justify addition of  
17 the question and, relatedly, are those purposes somewhere in  
18 the record?

19 MR. SHUMATE: Your Honor, the standard rationale was  
20 the one provided by the Secretary in his memorandum. If we  
21 ever get to the APA claim, that would be the basis on which the  
22 Court would review the reasonableness of his decision.

23 But in terms of the constitutional claim, plaintiffs  
24 have to show, notwithstanding all the significant deference  
25 that the Secretary is entitled to, that the addition of this

1 question violates the Constitution. But, again, there is no  
2 suggestion here that the Secretary does not have procedures in  
3 place to count every person in America, and it can't be the  
4 standard that anything that might cause an undercount would be  
5 somehow unconstitutional, because that would call into question  
6 many other questions on the form, and it would ignore the long  
7 history that this question has been asked on the census.

8 THE COURT: And I guess -- what if the political  
9 climate in our country was such that the administration was  
10 thought to be very anti gun, let's say, and there were  
11 perceived threats to gun ownership, thoughts that the  
12 administration and the federal government would seize people's  
13 guns, and that administration proposed adding a question to the  
14 census about whether and how many guns people owned. Do you  
15 think that would not violate the enumeration clause?

16 MR. SHUMATE: It would not violate the clause, and  
17 Congress could provide a remedy and pass a statute and say this  
18 is not a question that should be asked on the census. It  
19 wouldn't be for a court to decide this question is bad, this  
20 one is good. That is something that is squarely committed to  
21 the political branches to decide.

22 THE COURT: Who is handling this for the plaintiffs?

23 Ms. Goldstein again. All right.

24 Tell me why the Thurgood Marshall standard shouldn't  
25 apply here.

1 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, even if the Thurgood  
2 Marshall standard would apply, as I can address in a moment,  
3 this question would still violate it. But the Supreme Court in  
4 Wisconsin, a more recent case, has made clear the standards  
5 that the Court uses to assess the Secretary's decisionmaking  
6 authority with respect to the census and that is whether or not  
7 the Secretary's decisions bear a reasonable relationship to the  
8 accomplishment of an actual immigration keeping in mind the  
9 constitutional purposes of the census.

10 THE COURT: Tell me, measured against that standard,  
11 why asking any demographic questions on the census would pass  
12 muster, in other words, presumably asking about race, about  
13 sex, about all sorts of questions that have long been on the  
14 census, I mean they certainly don't -- they're not reasonably  
15 related to getting an accurate count because they don't do  
16 anything to advance that purpose and they presumably, to the  
17 extent they have any effect, it is to depress the count if only  
18 because people view filling out the form as more of a pain.

19 So how would any of those questions pass muster under  
20 that test?

21 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, this is not an ordinary  
22 demographic question.

23 THE COURT: That's not my question though. In other  
24 words, based on the test that you are articulating wouldn't any  
25 demographic question on the questionnaire fail?



1 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Absolutely not, your Honor. Ordinary  
2 questions which are subject to extensive testing procedures  
3 that are precisely designed in order to assess and minimize and  
4 deal with any impacts to accuracy likely do, when they emerge  
5 from the end point of that testing, bear a reasonable  
6 relationship to the accomplishment of an actual enumeration.  
7 The Secretary is permitted under Wisconsin to privileged  
8 distributional accuracy over numerical accuracy. So if adding  
9 a gender question or a race question brings down the count a  
10 certain percent, there is no suggestion that that is  
11 disproportionately impacting certain groups as defendant Jarmin  
12 has acknowledged with respect to this situation.

13 THE COURT: What about sexuality? Could the Secretary  
14 ask about sexuality in the interests of getting public health  
15 information, perhaps?

16 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, I think to answer that  
17 question we would need to wait and see the procedures that the  
18 Census Bureau puts that question to, for example, with respect  
19 to the race and ethnicity question that the Secretary looked at  
20 for nearly a decade subjecting it to focus group testing  
21 cognitive testing, all sorts of testing to assess the impact on  
22 accuracy.

23 Now to the extent that a sexuality question had a  
24 disproportionate impact that the Secretary acknowledged and  
25 recognized and decided to take an action to reduce the accuracy

1 of the census nonetheless, that may well state a claim. But  
2 the vast majority of decisions that the Secretary may make will  
3 not.

4 Now in this case -- there may be hard cases out there,  
5 your Honor, but this case is an easy case.

6 THE COURT: And is the standard an objective one, I  
7 assume? If one doesn't like at the intent of the Secretary or  
8 the government in adding the question, presumably it's an  
9 objective test of whether it's reasonably related to the goal  
10 of an actual enumeration.

11 MS. GOLDSTEIN: That is correct, your Honor.

12 However, defendants acknowledged recognition of the  
13 deterrent effect of this question certainly is good evidence  
14 that this will, in fact, undermine the enumeration and does not  
15 reasonably relate it to accomplishing enumeration.

16 THE COURT: But because it's objective evidence. In  
17 other words, let's assume for the sake of argument that the  
18 question was added by the Secretary to suppress the count in  
19 certain jurisdictions -- I'm not suggesting that that is the  
20 case but let's assume -- is that relevant to whether it states  
21 a claim under the enumeration clause.

22 MS. GOLDSTEIN: No, your Honor, but it may be well  
23 relevant to the claim under the APA.

24 THE COURT: Go back to the Thurgood Marshall standard  
25 and tell me why that should not be the relevant standard here.

1 It seems to me, as I mentioned to Mr. Shumate, that the census  
2 has long had essentially a dual purpose. On the one hand, it  
3 is intended to get an actual enumeration and count the number  
4 of people in our country for purposes of representation. On  
5 the other hand, it has long been accepted that it's a means by  
6 which the government can collect data on residents of the  
7 country. So why is -- it seems to me that the questions on the  
8 questionnaire are more tethered to that later purpose and if  
9 that's the case there is a little bit of a mismatch in  
10 measuring the acceptability of a question against whether it's  
11 reasonably related to the first goal.

12 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, plaintiffs are to some  
13 extent hampered on this because defendants have not proffered  
14 the standard or argued it.

15 THE COURT: They say there is no standard which is why  
16 it's a political question.

17 MS. GOLDSTEIN: But the end of that sentence that you  
18 read by Justice Marshall made clear that even on that standard  
19 of gathering additional demographic data that there are  
20 questions that are unduly broad in scope.

21 Now here what we are alleging, that the Secretary of  
22 Commerce has made a decision that reverses decades of settled  
23 position that the Census Bureau recognizes that this specific  
24 question will reduce the accuracy of the enumeration; in their  
25 words from 1980, will inevitably jeopardize the accuracy of the

1 count, where defendants themselves have recognized that this  
2 may have, as defendant Jarmin indicated, important impacts in  
3 immigrant and Hispanic communities against this particular  
4 historical and cultural moment where this administration's  
5 anti immigration policy --

6 THE COURT: Let me ask you a question about that and  
7 try and get at what role that plays in the argument. Let's  
8 assume for the sake of that argument that the prior  
9 administration had added the citizenship question in a  
10 different climate. New administration comes in, whether it's  
11 this one or some other one, that is perceived to be very  
12 anti immigrant. Does the existence of the question suddenly  
13 become unconstitutional because the political climate has  
14 changed?

15 MS. GOLDSTEIN: I think that the starting point in  
16 this case is significant. The starting point is a reversal of  
17 decades of the settled position. The starting point is without  
18 a single test or even explanation as to why that position is  
19 being changed. The starting point is a recognition that it  
20 will impair accuracy. I think if this is a long-standing  
21 question, this has been on the census, that might be a  
22 different situation.

23 Just to address defendants' contention that the  
24 historical practice weighs in favor of them, I think setting  
25 aside that I do think that this is a merits question, this gets

1 the merits wrong. This question has not been asked of all  
2 respondents since 1950. It, instead, has been relegated to the  
3 longer form instrument where the citizenship demand is one of  
4 many questions. On the ACS it can be statistically adjusted.  
5 Failure to answer does not bring a federal employee to your  
6 door, knocking on it, demanding to know if you are a citizen.

7 THE COURT: How can it be constitutional to include it  
8 on a long-form questionnaire and not on a short-form  
9 questionnaire? In other words, how can the constitutionality  
10 of whether the question is proffered or asked turn on the  
11 length of the questionnaire?

12 MS. GOLDSTEIN: The question before the Court is  
13 whether or not the decision that was made several months ago to  
14 add this question to the long-form questionnaire that goes to  
15 all households, whether or not that question is constitutional.  
16 The question of whether or not it was constitutional in 1970 I  
17 believe when it was -- when the world was different, when it  
18 was originally on the long form is not before the court. The  
19 question has not been -- has been asked on the ACS since 2005.

20 Now defendants' allegations that the ACS is  
21 effectively the same thing as the census I think really belie  
22 or ignore the allegations in plaintiffs' complaint. The Census  
23 Bureau has for decades repeatedly resisted calls to move the  
24 question from the ACS to the census precisely because while the  
25 question may perform on the ACS it does not perform on the

1 census because it undermines the accuracy of that instrument.

2 THE COURT: Why, measured against the reasonable  
3 relation standard that you're pressing, would the mere use of  
4 the long-form questionnaire, why wouldn't that be  
5 unconstitutional?

6 In other words, I think that the response rate of  
7 those who receive the long-form questionnaire is significantly  
8 lower than the response rate of those who receive the  
9 short-form questionnaire. On your argument wouldn't that be  
10 unconstitutional under the enumeration clause?

11 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, I think that just the lack  
12 of testing and the conduct with respect to this decision alone  
13 makes this decision distinguishable. With respect to the  
14 change in the long-form questionnaire, with respect to the ACS,  
15 with respect to those other demographic questions, they went  
16 through considered detailed procedures designed to assess and  
17 to minimize impacts on accuracy. Those tests, those procedures  
18 were entirely ignored here. And that alone distinguishes the  
19 Secretary's conduct.

20 THE COURT: All right. Thank you very much.

21 That concludes the argument on the motion to dismiss.  
22 Let me check with the court reporter whether we need a break or  
23 not.

24 She is willing to proceed so I am as well.

25 Why don't we hear from plaintiffs on discovery since

1 they're the moving parties on that front. I think the papers  
2 are fairly adequate for me to address most of the issues on  
3 this front. In that regard I don't intend to have a lengthy  
4 oral argument but I don't want to deprive you of your moment in  
5 the sun, Mr. Colangelo.

6 MR. COLANGELO: Thank you, your Honor.

7 Good morning. Matthew Colangelo from New York for the  
8 state and local government plaintiffs. I'll make two key  
9 points regarding the record. First is that the record the  
10 United States has prepared here is deficient on its face and  
11 should be completed. It deprives the Court of the opportunity  
12 to review the whole record as it's obligated to do under  
13 Section 706 of the APA. And the second broad argument I'll  
14 make is that the plaintiffs have, even once the record is  
15 completed, we anticipate the need for extra record discovery in  
16 light of the evidence of bad faith, the complicated issues  
17 involved in this case and, of course, the constitutional claim.

18 So turning to the first argument, as I've mentioned,  
19 the APA requires the Court to review the whole record. In  
20 Dopico v. Goldschmidt the Second Circuit --

21 THE COURT: Can I ask you a threshold question, which  
22 is why I shouldn't hold off until I've decided the motion to  
23 dismiss in light of the Supreme Court's decision in the DACA  
24 litigation arising out of California.

25 MR. COLANGELO: The circumstances in the DACA

1 litigation, your Honor, were extremely different and  
2 distinguishable from the circumstances here. The Court in that  
3 case pointed out that the United States had made an extremely  
4 strong showing of the overbroad nature of the discovery  
5 request. I believe the solicitor general's reply on cert to  
6 the Supreme Court mentioned that they would be obligated to  
7 review and produce 1.6 million records. So it was against the  
8 backdrop of that extremely broad production request that the  
9 Court said that it might make -- the Court directed the  
10 district court to stay its discovery order until it resolved  
11 the threshold questions. Nobody is requesting 1.6 million  
12 records here, your Honor.

13 THE COURT: How do I know that since the question of  
14 what you're requesting is not yet before me.

15 MR. COLANGELO: I think, among other reasons, your  
16 Honor, you know that because the United States hasn't made any  
17 contention at all that there's anything near the size of that  
18 record that's being withheld in this case as they did in the  
19 DACA litigation.

20 There are, to use the language from Dopico, there are  
21 a number of conspicuous absences from the record presented here  
22 and we would draw your attention to four in particular.

23 The first is that with the exception of background  
24 materials, there is essentially nothing in the record that  
25 predates the December 2017 request from the Justice Department.



1 There is no record at all of communications with other federal  
2 government components. The new supplemental memo that the  
3 Secretary added to the record just twelve days ago now  
4 discloses for the first time that over the course of 2017 the  
5 Secretary and his senior staff had a series of conversations  
6 with other federal government components. None of those  
7 records are anywhere in the Administrative Record that the  
8 United States produced.

9 Second, again with the exception of the December 2017  
10 memo, the United States hasn't produced anything at all  
11 reflecting the Justice Department's decision where, as here,  
12 the heart of the Secretary's rationale for asking about  
13 citizenship, according to his March decision memo, was the  
14 supposed need to better enforce sections of the Voting Rights  
15 Act. It's just not reasonable to believe that there are no  
16 other records that he directly or indirectly considered in the  
17 course of reaching his decision. In fact, the Secretary  
18 testified to Congress under oath that we had a lot of  
19 conversations with the Justice Department. If that's the case,  
20 those conversations ought to be included in the record.

21 The third key category of materials that are  
22 conspicuously omitted include records of the stakeholder  
23 outreach that the Secretary did conduct over the course of --  
24 earlier this year. The Secretary's decision memo says he  
25 reached out to about two dozen stakeholders. Other than what

1 appear to be undated, after-the-fact post hoc summaries that  
2 somebody somewhere prepared of those calls, there is no  
3 information at all about how those 24 stakeholders were  
4 selected; why, for example, was the National Association of  
5 Home Builders one of the stakeholders that the Secretary  
6 elected to reach out to here. The government has omitted the  
7 Secretary's briefing materials. All of these records are  
8 records that are necessary to help understand the government's  
9 decision.

10 And then the final category of materials conspicuously  
11 omitted are the materials that support Dr. Abowd's conclusion  
12 that adding this question would be costly and undermine the  
13 accuracy of the count. Dr. Abowd is the Census Bureau's chief  
14 scientist. Obviously materials that he relied on in reaching  
15 that adverse conclusion are materials that the Secretary  
16 indirectly considered and that body of evidence should be  
17 included in the record as well.

18 THE COURT: Why don't you briefly speak to the bad  
19 faith argument and then I want to address the question of scope  
20 and what should and shouldn't be permitted if I allow  
21 discovery. I don't know if that's you or Mr. Rios who is  
22 planning to address that.

23 MR. COLANGELO: I can address scope and then I will  
24 turn to Mr. Rios to address one aspect of our anticipated  
25 expert discovery, your Honor.

1           On bad faith, your Honor, we think there are at least  
2 five indicia of bad faith here, more than enough -- more than  
3 enough certainly singularly to justify expanding the record but  
4 in collection we think they make an overwhelming case.

5           THE COURT: List them quickly if you don't mind.

6           MR. COLANGELO: Why don't I focus on two. First is  
7 the tremendous political pressure that was brought to bear on  
8 the Commerce Department and the Census Bureau. The record that  
9 the Justice Department presented discloses what appear to be  
10 four telephone calls between Kris Kobach and the Commerce  
11 Secretary or his senior staff on this question at a time that  
12 the Commerce Secretary now admits he was considering how to  
13 proceed on this question. The Justice Department's only  
14 response in the paper they filed with the Court is that that  
15 appears to be isolated or unsolicited and quite frankly, your  
16 Honor, that's just not credible. The Commerce Secretary and  
17 the senior staff had four telephone calls with an adviser to  
18 the President and Vice-President on election law issues on the  
19 exact question that the Secretary now acknowledges he was then  
20 considering. Mr. Kobach presented to the Secretary proposed  
21 language to this question that matches nearly verbatim the  
22 language that the Secretary ultimately decided to add to the  
23 census questionnaire and yet the only conclusion one can draw  
24 is that it was isolated, incidental and immaterial contact.  
25 That's just not a reasonable position to take without exploring

1 more of the record.

2           The second argument that I'll mention briefly, that  
3 the shifting chronology here that the Commerce Department has  
4 presented we think also presents a strong case of bad faith.  
5 The March decision memo explicitly describes the Commerce  
6 Department's consideration of this question as being in  
7 response to the requests they received from the Justice  
8 Department. The Secretary's more or less contemporaneous sworn  
9 testimony to Congress repeats that point several times. In at  
10 least three different congressional hearings he uses language  
11 like we are responding only to the Justice Department; as you  
12 know, Congressperson, the Justice Department initiated this  
13 request; and then just twelve days ago the Commerce Secretary  
14 supplemented the record and disclosed that, in fact, the  
15 Commerce Department recruited the Justice Department to request  
16 this question, which certainly suggests that the Commerce  
17 Department knew where it wanted to go and was trying to build a  
18 record to support it. The rest of the arguments are set out in  
19 our papers, your Honor.

20           THE COURT: So talk to me about what the scope of  
21 discovery that you're seeking is and why I shouldn't, if I  
22 authorize it at all, severely constrain it.

23           MR. COLANGELO: Well, your Honor, I think we're  
24 actually looking for quite tailored discovery here and I think  
25 we can stagger it, I think as an initial --

1           THE COURT:  It's grown from three or four depositions  
2 at the initial conference to twenty.

3           MR. COLANGELO:  Fair enough, your Honor.  But at the  
4 initial conference we didn't have the Administrative Record  
5 that disclosed the role of Mr. Kobach at the instruction of  
6 Steve Bannon.  We didn't know that Wendy Teramoto, the  
7 Secretary's chief of staff, had a series of e-mails and several  
8 phonecalls with Mr. Kobach at the exact same time they were now  
9 considering this question.

10           So, respectfully, our blindfolded assessment of what  
11 we might need has expanded slightly, but I still think it's a  
12 reasonable and reasonably tailored request.  And so I would say  
13 a couple of things.

14           First, I think the Justice Department ought to  
15 complete the record by including the materials that are  
16 conspicuously omitted and that they acknowledge exist and they  
17 ought to do that in short order and at the same time ought to  
18 present a privilege log so that we can assess, without  
19 guessing, what their claims of privilege are and why those  
20 claims are or are not defensible.

21           I think once we have completed the administrative  
22 record, I think there is additional discovery, particularly in  
23 the nature of testimonial evidence, some third-party discovery,  
24 of course, Mr. Kobach, the campaign, Mr. Bannon, potentially  
25 some others.  I think it's critical that we get evidence from

1 the Department of Justice because the Department of Justice  
2 ostensibly was the basis for the Secretary's decision, and then  
3 expert testimony, which we can turn to in a moment.

4 THE COURT: And then talk to me about Mr. Kobach,  
5 Mr. Bannon. First of all, wouldn't it suffice, if I authorize  
6 discovery, to allow you to seek that discovery from the  
7 Commerce Department and/or the Justice Department alone? In  
8 other words, the relevance of whatever input they gave is what  
9 impact it had on the decision-makers at Commerce and that can  
10 be answered by discovery through Commerce alone. I'm not sure  
11 it warrants or necessitates expanding to third parties and  
12 then, second to that, Mr. Bannon is a former White House  
13 adviser and that implicates a whole set of separate and rather  
14 more significant issues, namely separation of powers issues,  
15 and executive privilege issues, and so forth. Why should I  
16 allow you to go there?

17 MR. COLANGELO: A couple of reasons, your Honor.  
18 First of all I do think we can table the question. I'm not  
19 prepared to concede that he we don't need third-party  
20 discovery. It may well be the only way that we can understand  
21 the basis for the Secretary's decision. But I do think we can  
22 table it to see, especially if we can do it quickly, what the  
23 actual completed record looks like and what other documents and  
24 potentially other testimonial evidence may disclose. And we  
25 certainly wouldn't be seeking to take third-party depositions

1 next week.

2 And I appreciate the concerns, obviously, about  
3 executive privilege. But we do have the separate -- two  
4 separate issues here. One is that the Secretary has testified  
5 to Congress that he was not aware at all of any communications  
6 from anyone in the White House to anyone on his team. So if it  
7 now turns out that that congressional testimony may have  
8 omitted input from Mr. Bannon, I think we would want to discuss  
9 the opportunity to seek further explication of what exactly  
10 happened.

11 And then the final reason why I'm not prepared to  
12 concede that this additional evidence may not be necessary is  
13 the involvement of political access here is problematic for the  
14 Commerce Department's decision in a way that might not arise in  
15 an ordinary policy judgment case for two reasons. First, it's  
16 not consistent with the Secretary's presentation of his  
17 decision in his decision memo; but second, the Census Bureau is  
18 a statistical agency that is governed by the White House's own  
19 procedures that govern how statistical agencies ought to  
20 operate and among the core tenets of those procedures is  
21 independence and autonomy from political actors. So to the  
22 extent that there was undue political involvement in the  
23 decision here, we think that it probably does bear somewhat  
24 heavily on the Court's ability to assess the record.

25 But I don't disagree that we can stagger it. I'm just

1 not prepared to concede now that we won't need it.

2 THE COURT: Let me hear from Mr. Rios briefly and then  
3 I'll here from Mr. Shumate -- excuse me, not Mr. Shumate.

4 Go ahead.

5 MR. RIOS: May it please the Court, your Honor,  
6 Rolando Rios on behalf of the plaintiffs. My brief comments,  
7 your Honor, are addressed to the need for discovery on an  
8 Article I claim. My clients, Hidalgo and Cameron Counties, are  
9 on the southernmost Texas border between Mexico and the United  
10 States. It is the epicenter of the hysterical anti immigrant  
11 rhetoric from the federal government. McAllen and Brownsville  
12 are the county seats. It is a microcosm, your Honor, of what  
13 is going on across the country in the Latino community. Quite  
14 frankly, the minority community across the country is  
15 traumatized by the federal government's actions.

16 THE COURT: Mr. Rios, I don't mean to cut you off but  
17 if you could get to the expert discovery point that you want to  
18 make.

19 MR. RIOS: Yes, your Honor. The general comments that  
20 I have is that based on their own expert's testimony that the  
21 citizenship question will increase the nonresponsiveness I feel  
22 it's important that expert testimony to update that data based  
23 on the present environment is essential. Your Honor, the  
24 importance of census data is lost sometimes here. I've been  
25 practicing voting rights law for 30 years. And, quite frankly,



1 census data is the gold standard that the federal courts use to  
2 adjudicate the allocation of judicial power -- I mean  
3 electoral power and political power and federal resources. So  
4 this citizenship question is designed to tarnish that gold  
5 standard and basically deny our clients the political power  
6 that they're entitled to and also federal funds.

7 THE COURT: Thank you very much. Let me hear from  
8 Ms. Vargas I think it is.

9 MR. FREEDMAN: Your Honor, do you want to hear from us  
10 before the defendants or --

11 THE COURT: I didn't realize that you wished to have a  
12 word.

13 MR. FREEDMAN: Sorry, your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Sure. That makes more sense, that order.  
15 Go ahead.

16 MR. FREEDMAN: Your Honor, John Freedman for the NYIC  
17 plaintiffs. I could add additional points to what the state  
18 did on why the record needs to be supplemented. I could point  
19 to additional gaps. A lot of those are covered in our letter.  
20 I could point to additional evidence why expansion of the  
21 record is appropriate and layout bad faith. But I think,  
22 again, I think that's covered in the letter.

23 THE COURT: OK.

24 MR. FREEDMAN: I do think it is worth emphasizing that  
25 we have an additional constitutional claim, equal protection

1 claim, that we believe entitles us to discovery. The basis for  
2 that is Rule 26 to start with, which says that we have the  
3 right to conduct discovery to any issue that's relevant.  
4 Certainly, the equal protection claim has elements that are not  
5 and do not overlap with the APA claim, including intent and  
6 impact and the history into the decision. We think that under  
7 the Supreme Court precedence, Webster v. Doe, we are entitled  
8 to conduct discovery and that there is a parallel APA claim.

9 THE COURT: It strikes me that the Supreme Court's  
10 decision In re United States, the DACA litigation, counsel is  
11 cautioned in allowing discovery before a court has considered  
12 threshold issues. I think the state's case is a little  
13 different in the sense that I have heard oral argument and have  
14 already gotten full briefing on those issues and in that regard  
15 can weigh that in the balance. But obviously the motion in  
16 your case is not yet fully submitted.

17 MR. FREEDMAN: It will be soon.

18 THE COURT: It will be soon. That is true.

19 MR. FREEDMAN: I think with respect to our case we can  
20 argue it now, you can take it under advisement until there is a  
21 ruling. I also think there's an important distinction in the  
22 way the DACA case was handled in terms of supplementing the  
23 administrative record and that can be going on while the  
24 government has already put forward a record that is manifestly  
25 deficient. Their work you can provide guidance to them to how

1 they supplement it while the motion is under consideration. I  
2 think that that's permitted under how the Supreme Court ruled  
3 in the DACA case.

4 THE COURT: Anything else?

5 MR. FREEDMAN: I do want -- just on scope. Obviously,  
6 you were asking questions about scope and how to control it. I  
7 think that the constitutional precedence we would cite Webster  
8 v. Doe on intent of decision-makers. All counsel have active  
9 involvement of the court in making sure discovery is tailored.  
10 We do have tailored discovery in mind. We weren't here at the  
11 May 4 conference obviously. We've always been approaching this  
12 as, because we have additional elements on our intentional  
13 discrimination claim, that we have additional things that we'd  
14 like to be able to prove, that under Arlington Heights we are  
15 entitled to prove. That's part of the reason why the  
16 deposition list is a little bit longer.

17 I also do think it would be helpful to get guidance  
18 from the Court on the question of the supplementation of  
19 Administrative Record. In particular, we cited cases in our  
20 letter spelling out that it's the obligation of the Agency, not  
21 just merely the Secretary, to produce records that are under  
22 consideration. We think that the Court should provide guidance  
23 that the whole record should include materials prior to  
24 December 12 and the pre-decisional determination to reach out  
25 to other agencies and have them sponsor the question. In many

1 ways looking at that prehistory, there's a parallel between  
2 this case and what happened in Overton Park which is the  
3 seminal Supreme Court case here where the Court was hamstrung  
4 by its ability to review the case because all that the  
5 Department of Transportation had produced was effectively a  
6 post-litigation record. And I think you could look at what the  
7 Department has done here as a similar or analogous circumstance  
8 that they made a decision that they wanted to have this  
9 question. They had a response, then they said we're now on the  
10 clock, it's now time to start building our record, and that's  
11 what we're going to produce, and we don't have the real record  
12 before us.

13 THE COURT: Thank you.

14 Let me hear from Ms. Vargas and then we'll proceed.

15 Ms. Vargas, tell me why the supplemental memo or  
16 addition to the Administrative Record alone doesn't give rise  
17 to the need for discovery here. It seems that the ground has  
18 shifted quite dramatically; that initially in both the  
19 Administrative Record and in testimony the Secretary's position  
20 was that this was requested by the Department of Justice and lo  
21 and behold in a supplemental memo of half a page without  
22 explanation it turns out that that's not entirely the case. So  
23 doesn't that point to the need for discovery?

24 MS. VARGAS: Your Honor, there is nothing inconsistent  
25 between the supplemental memo and the original memo. The

1 original memo addresses a particular point in time. There is a  
2 receipt of the DOJ letter. It's uncontested that it was  
3 received on a particular date. At that point, as the Secretary  
4 said in his original memo, we gave a hard look, after we  
5 received the formal request from the Department of Justice, and  
6 then he details the procedures and the analysis that he started  
7 at that point in time.

8 THE COURT: First of all, isn't it material to know  
9 that that letter was generated by a request from the Secretary  
10 himself as opposed to at least the misleading suggestion that  
11 it was from the Department of Justice without invitation?

12 MS. VARGAS: Your Honor, I resist the suggestion that  
13 it was misleading as an initial matter.

14 THE COURT: That's my question. Isn't it misleading  
15 or at least isn't there a basis to conclude that it's  
16 misleading and therefore an entitlement for the plaintiffs to  
17 probe that?

18 MS. VARGAS: No, your Honor. It's not misleading. It  
19 simply starts at a particular point in time and it goes  
20 forward. It doesn't speak whatsoever to the process that  
21 preceded the receipt of the DOJ memo and that's because the  
22 Administrative Record does not include internal deliberations,  
23 the consultative process, or the internal discussions that  
24 happen inter-agency or intra-agency. That's very settled law.  
25 It's black letter administrative law that what is put on the

1 administrative record is the decisional document and the  
2 informational basis for that decision but not the discussions  
3 that precede that or that go along with it. That has been the  
4 decisions of the Second Circuit, the D.C. Circuit en banc in  
5 San Luis Obispo. All of those courts speak to the fact that  
6 the internal conversations, the process documents, are not part  
7 of the administrative record and so, therefore, they wouldn't  
8 normally be disclosed. All the things that precede a decision  
9 internally, the processes, the discussions, none of that would  
10 normally be part of an administrative record and it wouldn't  
11 normally be part of a decisional document. Normally when an  
12 agency issues a decision it doesn't go through: And then we  
13 had this discussion, and then there was this discussion and  
14 they arrive at --

15 THE COURT: But it does include the underlying data  
16 that the decision-maker considered or that those advising the  
17 decision-maker considered and how can it possibly be that the  
18 Secretary began conversations about this shortly after he was  
19 confirmed and there is literally virtually nothing in the  
20 record between that date and December 12 or whatever the date  
21 is that the letter arrives from the Department of Justice? It  
22 just -- doesn't that --

23 MS. VARGAS: Data is a different matter, your Honor.  
24 The underlying information and data we believe is included and  
25 there is -- there is some allegation that the data that the

1 Census Bureau relied upon in generating analyses of the DOJ  
2 request was not included in the Administrative Record.

3 Now the summary of that analysis, in fact, is included  
4 in the Administrative Record. It is in the Abowd -- two  
5 different Abowd memos that are part of the Administrative  
6 Record.

7 Raw data itself, the raw census data from which that  
8 analysis is generated is protected by law. It's  
9 confidential --

10 THE COURT: I don't mean the data but the analyses of  
11 those who are advising the Secretary on whether this is a good  
12 idea or bad idea.

13 MS. VARGAS: Well to the extent they are discussing  
14 pros and cons, analysis, recommendations, all of that would  
15 fall within the deliberative process privilege.

16 THE COURT: Why should that not be on a privilege log?

17 MS. VARGAS: Because, your Honor, courts have  
18 routinely held that privilege logs are not required in APA  
19 cases precisely because these documents are not part --

20 THE COURT: Didn't the Second Circuit say exactly the  
21 opposite in the DACA litigation out of the Eastern District?

22 MS. VARGAS: Respectfully no, your Honor, it did not.  
23 I believe you're talking about the Nielsen slip order in which  
24 they denied a writ of mandamus. So, first of all, we're  
25 talking about a denial of a writ of mandamus which, of course,

1 is reviewing the district court decision under an exceedingly  
2 high standard, whether or not there are extreme circumstances  
3 warranting overturning the district court's decision.  
4 Obviously, of course, it's also not a published opinion but an  
5 order of the court, it's nonbinding. But on the merits I do  
6 not believe that the Second Circuit stated that privilege logs  
7 are required. If you look at the district court order that's  
8 being reviewed in that case, the District Court had decided  
9 that on the facts of that case a privilege log was required  
10 because it had found that the government had acted in bad  
11 faith. So there was -- it wasn't binding that in every APA  
12 case privilege logs are required. The District Court had said  
13 that in constructing the administrative record the agency had  
14 not included all of the documents that were directly or  
15 indirectly before the decision-maker. And in that specific  
16 circumstance where there had been that history, it said that we  
17 are not affording the normal presumption of regularity to the  
18 government and it was going to require a privilege log. And  
19 the Second Circuit did not grant writ of mandamus to overturn  
20 that decision.

21 But it doesn't stand for a broader proposition that in  
22 all APA cases privilege logs are required. The vast weight of  
23 authority is, in fact, to the contrary. Because these  
24 documents are not part of an administrative record in the first  
25 place, you don't log them; just as in civil discovery, if a



1 document is not responsive to a document request, you don't put  
2 it on a privilege log. The same principle applies in this  
3 case.

4 THE COURT: All right. Anything else you want to say?

5 MS. VARGAS: Yes, your Honor. I did want to address a  
6 couple of points on the scope of discovery, particularly expert  
7 discovery. They are trying to take advantage of an exception  
8 that doesn't really apply to have broad expert discovery in a  
9 case when the Second Circuit in Sierra Club has specifically  
10 said it is error for a district court in an APA case to allow  
11 experts to opine and to challenge the propriety of an agency  
12 decision.

13 THE COURT: Well, the way I read Sierra Club it  
14 doesn't speak to whether expert discovery should be authorized  
15 in the first instance. It speaks to the deference owed to the  
16 agency and whether a court can rely on an expert -- expert  
17 evidence in order to supplant or disregard the agency's  
18 opinion. But that's a merits question. It's not a question  
19 pertaining to discovery.

20 MS. VARGAS: I disagree, your Honor. I think what the  
21 Second Circuit said is that expert discovery -- extra record,  
22 expert discovery for the purposes of challenging the agency's  
23 expert analysis is absolutely error and should not be allowed  
24 because of the fact that record review in an APA case under  
25 Supreme Court precedent, Camp v. Pitts, it must be confined to

1 the record.

2 THE COURT: What if the bad faith exception applies?

3 MS. VARGAS: Well the bad faith exception, of course,  
4 is a separate exception. Specific to the expert point.

5 THE COURT: But my question is that if I find that the  
6 presumption of regularity has been rebutted and the bad faith  
7 exception applies, does that not open the door to expert  
8 discovery, putting aside the ultimate question of whether and  
9 to what extent I could rely on that expert discovery or  
10 evidence in terms of evaluating the Secretary's decision?

11 MS. VARGAS: No, your Honor. Because the exceptions  
12 for the record review rule are to be narrowly construed. So to  
13 the extent that your Honor found that there was bad faith,  
14 which we obviously contest and don't believe extra record  
15 discovery is appropriate here, but if the Court were to find  
16 that, then the discovery had to be narrowly tailored to the  
17 points on which you found that there was some allegation of bad  
18 faith. So, for example, if there was a very specific issue  
19 that your Honor thought needed to be developed that perhaps  
20 could be ordered but it wouldn't open the door up to make this  
21 just a regular civil litigation under Rule 26 with broad  
22 discovery allowed on all claims on all issues and any expert  
23 discovery they wanted. It doesn't open the door that wide. It  
24 just has to be narrowed to the specific point on which you  
25 find. But, of course, the government does not concede, it does

1 not believe that discovery would be appropriate in this case.

2 THE COURT: I understand.

3 MS. VARGAS: Thank you, your Honor.

4 THE COURT: All right. I was largely prepared to rule  
5 on the discovery question based on the papers and nothing I've  
6 heard from counsel has altered my view so I am prepared to give  
7 you my ruling on that front.

8 In doing so, I am of course mindful of the Supreme  
9 Court's decision In re United States, 138 S. Ct. 443 (2017)  
10 (per curiam), holding in connection with lawsuits challenging  
11 the rescission of DACA that the district court should have  
12 resolved the government's threshold arguments before deciding  
13 whether to authorize discovery -- on the theory that the  
14 threshold arguments, "if accepted, likely would eliminate the  
15 need for the district court to examine a complete  
16 Administrative Record." That is from page 445 of that  
17 decision. I do not read that decision, however, to deprive me  
18 of the broad discretion that district courts usually have in  
19 deciding whether and when to authorize discovery despite a  
20 pending motion to dismiss; indeed, the Supreme Court's decision  
21 was expressly limited to "the specific facts" of the case  
22 before it. That's from the same page. More to the point,  
23 several considerations warrant a different approach here.  
24 First, unlike the DACA litigation, this case does not arise in  
25 the immigration and national security context, where the

1 Executive Branch enjoys broad, indeed arguably broadest  
2 authority. Second, time is of the essence here given that the  
3 clock is running on census preparations. If this case is to be  
4 resolved with enough time to seek appellate review, whether  
5 interlocutory or otherwise, it is essential to proceed on  
6 parallel tracks. Third, and most substantially, unlike the  
7 DACA litigation, defendants' threshold argument here are fully  
8 briefed, at least in the states' case. See Regents of  
9 University of California v. U.S. Department of Homeland  
10 Security, 279 F.Supp. 3d 1011, at 1028 (N.D. Cal. 2018)  
11 discussing the procedural history of the DACA litigation and  
12 making clear that the motion to dismiss was not filed at the  
13 time that discovery was authorized. Although I reserve  
14 judgment on those threshold arguments, and I should make clear  
15 that I am reserving judgment on the motion to dismiss at this  
16 time, I am sufficiently confident, having read the parties'  
17 briefs and heard the oral argument today that the state and  
18 city plaintiffs' claims will survive, at least in part, to  
19 warrant proceeding on the discovery front. Moreover, I hope to  
20 issue a decision on the threshold issues in short order. So in  
21 the unlikely event that I do end up dismissing plaintiffs' case  
22 in its entirety, it is unlikely that defendants will have been  
23 heavily burdened in the interim.

24 With that, let me turn to the three broad categories  
25 of additional discovery that plaintiffs in the two cases have

1 sought in their letters of June 26, namely, a privilege log for  
2 all materials withheld from the record on the basis of  
3 privilege; completion of the previously filed Administrative  
4 Record; and extra record discovery. See docket no. 193 in the  
5 states' case, that is plaintiffs' letter in that case. For  
6 reasons I will explain, I find that plaintiffs have the better  
7 of the argument on all three fronts. I will address each in  
8 turn and then turn to the scope and timing of discovery that I  
9 will allow.

10           The first issue whether defendants need to produce a  
11 privilege log is easily resolved. Put simply, defendants'  
12 arguments are, in my view, squarely foreclosed by the Second  
13 Circuit's December 17, 2017 rejection of similar arguments In  
14 re Nielsen. That is docket no. 17-3345 (2d Cir. December 27 or  
15 17, I think, 2017). That is the DACA litigation pending in the  
16 Eastern District of New York. I recognize, of course, that  
17 that was -- it arises in a mandamus petition and it is  
18 unpublished, but I think the reasons articulated by the Court  
19 of Appeals counsel for the production of a privilege log here.  
20 If anything, the justifications for requiring production of a  
21 privilege log are stronger here as the underlying documents do  
22 not implicate matters of immigration or national security and  
23 the burdens would appear to be substantially less significant  
24 or at least defendants have not articulated a particularly  
25 onerous burden. Moreover, whereas the defendants in Nielsen

1 had at least identified some basis for asserting privilege,  
2 namely the deliberative process privilege, defendants here, at  
3 least until the argument a moment ago, did not provide any such  
4 basis. See the states' letter at page two, note three.

5 Accordingly, defendants must produce a privilege log  
6 identifying with specificity the documents that have been  
7 withheld from the Administrative Record and, for each document,  
8 the asserted privilege or privileges.

9 Second, plaintiffs seek an order directing the  
10 government to complete the Administrative Record. Although an  
11 agency's designation of the Administrative Record is generally  
12 afforded a presumption of regularity, that presumption can be  
13 rebutted where the seeking party shows that "materials exist  
14 that were actually considered by the agency decision-makers but  
15 are not in the record as filed." Comprehensive Community  
16 Development Corp. v. Sebelius, 890 F.Supp. 2d 305, 309  
17 (S.D.N.Y. 2012). Plaintiffs have done precisely that here.

18 In his March 2018 decision memorandum produced in the  
19 Administrative Record at page 1313, Secretary Ross stated that  
20 he "set out to take a hard look" at adding the citizenship  
21 question "following receipt" of a request from the Department  
22 of Justice on December 12, 2017. Additionally, in sworn  
23 testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, of which I  
24 can take judicial notice, see, for example, Ault v. J. M.  
25 Smucker Company, 2014 WL 1998235 at page 2 (S.D.N.Y. May 15,

1 2014), Secretary Ross testified under oath that the Department  
2 of Justice had "initiated the request for inclusion of the  
3 citizenship question." See the states' letter at page four.  
4 It now appears that those statements were potentially untrue.  
5 On June 21, this year, without explanation, defendants filed a  
6 supplement to the Administrative Record, namely a half-page  
7 memorandum from Secretary Ross, also dated June 21, 2018. That  
8 appears at docket no. 189 in the states' case. In this  
9 memorandum, Secretary Ross stated that "soon after" his  
10 appointment as Secretary, which occurred in February of 2017,  
11 almost ten months before the request from the Department of  
12 Justice, he "began considering" whether to add the citizenship  
13 question and that "as part of that deliberative process," he  
14 and his staff "inquired whether the department of justice would  
15 support, and if so would request, inclusion of a citizenship  
16 question." In other words, it now appears that the idea of  
17 adding the citizenship question originated with Secretary Ross,  
18 not the Department of Justice and that its origins long  
19 predated the December 2017 letter from the Justice Department.  
20 Even without that significant change in the timeline, the  
21 absence of virtually any documents predating DOJ's  
22 December 2017 letter was hard to fathom. But with it, it is  
23 inconceivable to me that there aren't additional documents from  
24 earlier in 2017 that should be made part of the Administrative  
25 Record.

1           That alone would warrant an order to complete the  
2 Administrative Record. But, compounding matters, the current  
3 record expressly references documents that Secretary Ross  
4 claims to have considered but which are not themselves a part  
5 of the Administrative Record. For example, Secretary Ross  
6 claims that "additional empirical evidence about the impact of  
7 sensitive questions on the survey response rates came from the  
8 Senior Vice-President of Data Science at Nielsen." That's page  
9 1318 of the record. But the record contains no empirical  
10 evidence from Nielsen. Additionally, the record does not  
11 include documents relied upon by subordinates, upon whose  
12 advice Secretary Ross plainly relied in turn. For example,  
13 Secretary Ross's memo references "the department's review" of  
14 inclusion of the citizenship question, and advice of "Census  
15 Bureau staff." That's pages 1314, 1317, and 1319. Yet the  
16 record is nearly devoid of materials from key personnel at the  
17 Census Bureau or Department of Commerce -- apart from two  
18 memoranda from the Census Bureau's chief scientist which  
19 strongly recommend that the Secretary not add a citizenship  
20 question. Pages 1277 and 1308. The Administrative Record is  
21 supposed to include "materials that the agency decision-maker  
22 indirectly or constructively considered." Batalla Vidal v.  
23 Duke, 2017 WL 4737280 at page 5 (E.D.N.Y. October 19, 2017).

24           Here, for the reasons that I've stated, I conclude  
25 that the current Administrative Record does not include the



I739stao

101a

1 full scope of such materials. Accordingly, plaintiffs' request  
2 for an order directing defendants to complete the  
3 Administrative Record is well founded.

4 Finally, I agree with the plaintiffs that there is a  
5 solid basis to permit discovery of extra-record evidence in  
6 this case. To the extent relevant here, a court may allow  
7 discovery beyond the record where "there has been a strong  
8 showing in support of a claim of bad faith or improper behavior  
9 on the part of agency decision-makers." National Audubon  
10 Society v. Hoffman, 132 F.3d 7, 14 (2d Cir. 1997). Without  
11 intimating any view on the ultimate issues in this case, I  
12 conclude that plaintiffs have made such a showing here for  
13 several reasons.

14 First, Secretary Ross's supplemental memorandum of  
15 June 21, which I've already discussed, could be read to suggest  
16 that the Secretary had already decided to add the citizenship  
17 question before he reached out to the Justice Department; that  
18 is, that the decision preceded the stated rationale. See, for  
19 example, Tummino v. von Eschenbach, 427 F.Supp. 2d 212, 233  
20 (E.D.N.Y. 2006) authorizing extra-record discovery where there  
21 was evidence that the agency decision-makers had made a  
22 decision and, only thereafter took steps "to find acceptable  
23 rationales for the decision." Second, the Administrative  
24 Record reveals that Secretary Ross overruled senior Census  
25 Bureau career staff, who had concluded -- and this is at page

1 1277 of the record -- that reinstating the citizenship question  
2 would be "very costly" and "harm the quality of the census  
3 count." Once again, see Tummino, 427 F.Supp. 2d at 231-32,  
4 holding that the plaintiffs had made a sufficient showing of  
5 bad faith where "senior level personnel overruled the  
6 professional staff." Third, plaintiffs' allegations suggest  
7 that defendants deviated significantly from standard operating  
8 procedures in adding the citizenship question. Specifically,  
9 plaintiffs allege that, before adopting changes to the  
10 questionnaire, the Census Bureau typically spends considerable  
11 resources and time -- in some instances up to ten years --  
12 testing the proposed changes. See the amended complaint which  
13 is docket no. 85 in the states' case at paragraph 59. Here, by  
14 defendants' own admission -- see the amended complaint at  
15 paragraph 62 and page 1313 of the Administrative Record --  
16 defendants added an entirely new question after substantially  
17 less consideration and without any testing at all. Yet again  
18 Tummino is instructive. See 427 F.Supp. 2d at 233, citing an  
19 "unusual" decision-making process as a basis for extra-record  
20 discovery.

21 Finally, plaintiffs have made at least a prima facie  
22 showing that Secretary Ross's stated justification for  
23 reinstating the citizenship question -- namely, that it is  
24 necessary to enforce Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act -- was  
25 pretextual. To my knowledge, the Department of Justice and

I739stao

103a

1 civil rights groups have never, in 53 years of enforcing  
2 Section 2, suggested that citizenship data collected as part of  
3 the decennial census, data that is by definition quickly out of  
4 date, would be helpful let alone necessary to litigating such  
5 claims. See the states case docket no. 187-1 at 14; see also  
6 paragraph 97 of the amended complaint. On top of that,  
7 plaintiffs' allegations that the current Department of Justice  
8 has shown little interest in enforcing the Voting Rights Act  
9 casts further doubt on the stated rationale. See paragraph 184  
10 of the complaint which is docket no. 1 in the Immigration  
11 Coalition case. Defendants may well be right that those  
12 allegations are "meaningless absent a comparison of the  
13 frequency with which past actions have been brought or data on  
14 the number of investigations currently being undertaken," and  
15 that plaintiffs may fail "to recognize the possibility that the  
16 DOJ's voting-rights investigations might be hindered by a lack  
17 of citizenship data." That is page 5 of the government's  
18 letter which is docket no. 194 in the states case. But those  
19 arguments merely point to and underscore the need to look  
20 beyond the Administrative Record.

21 To be clear, I am not today making a finding that  
22 Secretary Ross's stated rationale was pretextual -- whether it  
23 was or wasn't is a question that I may have to answer if or  
24 when I reach the ultimate merits of the issues in these cases.  
25 Instead, the question at this stage is merely whether --

1 assuming the truth of the allegations in their complaints --  
2 plaintiffs have made a strong preliminary or prima facie  
3 showing that they will find material beyond the Administrative  
4 Record indicative of bad faith. See, for example, Ali v.  
5 Pompeo, 2018 WL 2058152 at page 4 (E.D.N.Y. May 2, 2018). For  
6 the reasons I've just summarized, I conclude that the  
7 plaintiffs have done so.

8           That brings me to the question of scope. On that  
9 score, I am mindful that discovery in an APA action, when  
10 permitted, "should not transform the litigation into one  
11 involving all the liberal discovery available under the federal  
12 rules. Rather, the Court must permit only that discovery  
13 necessary to effectuate the Court's judicial review; i.e.,  
14 review the decision of the agency under Section 706." That is  
15 from Ali v. Pompeo at page 4, citing cases. I recognize, of  
16 course, that plaintiffs argue that they are independently  
17 entitled to discovery in connection with their constitutional  
18 claims. I'm inclined to disagree given that the APA itself  
19 provides for judicial review of agency action that is "contrary  
20 to" the Constitution. See, for example, Chang v. USCIS, 254  
21 F.Supp. 3d 160 at 161-62 (D.D.C. 2017). But, even if  
22 plaintiffs are correct on that score, it is well within my  
23 authority under Rule 26 to limit the scope of discovery.

24           Mindful of those admonitions, not to mention the  
25 separation of powers principles at stake here, I am not

I739stao

105a

1 inclined to allow as much or as broad discovery as the  
2 plaintiffs seek, at least in the first instance. First, absent  
3 agreement of defendants or leave of Court, of me, I will limit  
4 plaintiffs to ten fact depositions. To the extent that  
5 plaintiffs seek to take more than that, they will have to make  
6 a detailed showing in the form of a letter motion, after  
7 conferring with defendants, that the additional deposition or  
8 depositions are necessary. Second, again absent agreement of  
9 the defendants or leave of Court, I will limit discovery to the  
10 Departments of Commerce and Justice. As defendants' own  
11 arguments make clear, materials from the Department of Justice  
12 are likely to shed light on the motivations for Secretary  
13 Ross's decision -- and were arguably constructively considered  
14 by him insofar as he has cited the December 2017 letter as the  
15 basis for his decision. At this stage, however, I am not  
16 persuaded that discovery from other third parties would be  
17 necessary or appropriate; to the extent that third parties may  
18 have influenced Secretary Ross's decision, one would assume  
19 that that influence would be evidenced in Commerce Department  
20 materials and witnesses themselves. Further, to the extent  
21 that plaintiffs would seek discovery from the White House,  
22 including from current and former White House officials, it  
23 would create "possible separation of powers issues." That is  
24 from page 4 of the slip opinion in the Nielsen order. Third,  
25 although I suspect there will be a strong case for allowing a

I739stao

106a

1 deposition of Secretary Ross himself, I will defer that  
2 question to another day. For one thing, I think it should be  
3 the subject of briefing in and of itself. It raises a number  
4 of thorny issues. For another, I'm inclined to think that  
5 plaintiffs should take other depositions before deciding  
6 whether they need or want to go down that road and bite off  
7 that issue recognizing, among other things, that defendants  
8 have raised the specter of appellate review in the event that I  
9 did allow it. At the same time, I want to make sure that I  
10 have enough time to decide the issue and to allow for the  
11 possibility of appellate review without interfering with an  
12 expeditious schedule. So on that issue I'd like you to meet  
13 and confer with one another and discuss a timeline and a way of  
14 raising the issue, that is to say, when it is both ripe but  
15 also timely and would allow for an orderly resolution.

16 So with those limitations, I will allow plaintiffs to  
17 engage in discovery beyond the record. Further, I will allow  
18 for expert discovery. Expert testimony would seem to be  
19 commonplace in cases of this sort. See, for example, Cuomo v.  
20 Baldrige, 674 F.Supp. 1089 (S.D.N.Y. 1987). And as I indicated  
21 in my colloquy with Ms. Vargas, I do not read Sierra v. United  
22 States Army Corps of Engineers, 772 F.2d 1043 (2d Cir. 1985),  
23 to "prohibit" expert discovery as defendants suggestion. That  
24 case, in my view, speaks the deference that a court ultimately  
25 owes the agency's own expert analyses, but it does not speak to

I739stao

107a

1 the propriety of expert discovery, let alone clearly prohibit  
2 such discovery, let alone do so in a case where, as I have just  
3 done so, a finding of bad faith and a rebuttal of the  
4 presumption of regularity are at issue.

5 That leaves only the question of timing. I recognize  
6 that you proposed schedules without knowing the scope of  
7 discovery that I would permit. I would like to set a schedule  
8 today. In that regard, would briefly hear from both sides with  
9 respect to the schedule. Alternatively, I could allow you to  
10 meet and confer and propose a schedule in writing if you think  
11 that that would be more helpful. Let me facilitate the  
12 discussion by throwing out a proposed schedule which is based  
13 in part on your letters and modifications that I've made to the  
14 scope of discovery.

15 First, by July 16, I think defendants should produce  
16 the complete record as well as a privilege log and initial  
17 disclosures. I recognize that Rule 26(a)(1)(B)(i) exempts from  
18 initial disclosure "an action for review on an administrative  
19 record" but in light of my decision allowing extra-record  
20 discovery I do not read that exception to apply.

21 Then I would propose that by September 7, plaintiffs  
22 will disclose their expert reports.

23 By September 21, defendants will disclose their expert  
24 reports, if any.

25 By October 1, plaintiffs will disclose any rebuttal

1 expert reports.

2 And fact an expert discovery would close by  
3 October 12, 2018.

4 Plaintiffs also propose that the parties would then be  
5 ready for trial on October 31. My view is it's premature to  
6 talk about having a trial. For one thing, it may well end up  
7 making sense to proceed by way of summary judgment rather than  
8 trial. For another thing, I don't know if we need to build in  
9 time for Daubert motions or other pretrial motions that would  
10 require more than 19 days to brief and for me to decide. I  
11 would be inclined, instead, to schedule a status conference for  
12 sometime in September to check in on where things stand, making  
13 sure that things are proceeding apace and get a sense of what  
14 is coming down the pike and decide how best to proceed. Having  
15 said that, I think it would make sense for you guys to block  
16 time in late October and November in the event that I do decide  
17 a trial is warranted. Again, I am mindful that my word is not  
18 likely to be the final one here and I want to make sure that  
19 all sides have an adequate opportunity to seek whatever review  
20 they would need to seek after a final decision.

21 So that's my ruling. You can respond to my proposed  
22 schedule. I'd be inclined to set it today but if you think you  
23 need additional time.

24 MR. FREEDMAN: Your Honor, John Freedman. Just one  
25 clarification. I think it was clear from what you said but in



I739stao

109a

1 terms of the number of depositions you meant ten collectively  
2 between the two cases, not ten per case?

3 THE COURT: Correct. And they would be  
4 cross-designated or cross-referenced in both cases. Correct.

5 MR. FREEDMAN: Understood, your Honor.

6 THE COURT: And, again, I don't mean to suggest that  
7 you will get more, but that's not -- I did invite you to make a  
8 showing with specificity for why additional depositions would  
9 be needed. If it turns out that it is warranted, I'm prepared  
10 to allow it but, mindful of the various principles at stake and  
11 the limited scope of review under the APA, I think that it  
12 makes sense to rein discovery in in a way that it wouldn't be a  
13 standard civil action.

14 So, thoughts?

15 MR. COLANGELO: Your Honor, for the state and local  
16 government plaintiffs, we have no concerns at all.

17 THE COURT: Microphone, please.

18 MR. COLANGELO: For the state and local government  
19 plaintiffs, we have no concerns at all with the various  
20 deadlines that the Court has set out. Thank you.

21 MR. FREEDMAN: Your Honor, for the NYIC plaintiffs we  
22 concur. We think that it sets an appropriately expedited  
23 schedule that will resolve the issues in time and we appreciate  
24 the expedited consideration.

25 THE COURT: All right. Defendants.

I739stao

110a

1 MS. BAILEY: Your Honor, I have a couple clarifying  
2 questions. As far as the proposed July 16 deadline, you say  
3 completing the record would that be the same deadline you  
4 envision for the privilege log?

5 THE COURT: Yes.

6 MS. BAILEY: We would ask that the schedule we have  
7 already set in other actions, that we have a little bit more  
8 time for that initial deadline. We have a number of briefs and  
9 an argument coming up that same week. Could we push that back  
10 until a bit later in July?

11 THE COURT: And when you say "that," meaning the  
12 deadline for initial disclosures, completing the record, and  
13 the log or only a part of those?

14 MS. BAILEY: Yes, your Honor. All -- it would make  
15 sense I think to do them all together. But it would -- we'd  
16 like to move that a little later in July.

17 THE COURT: Well I don't want to move it too much  
18 later in July because it will backup everything else. Why  
19 don't I give you until July 23. I would imagine that that  
20 would not materially affect the remainder of the schedule and  
21 would give you an extra week. Next.

22 MS. BAILEY: Thank you, your Honor.

23 One other point. In the conference before Judge  
24 Seeborg, Judge Seeborg, as your Honor is aware, he reserved the  
25 issue of deciding whether discovery was warranted. But as I

I739stao

111a

1 understand it, he strongly indicated that he thought that -- if  
2 discovery is warranted in different actions, that the  
3 plaintiffs should coordinate between those actions and asked  
4 for the views of the parties on how that coordination should  
5 take place. So he didn't ultimately rule on that but we agree  
6 that coordinate between parties, if discovery is ordered in the  
7 other cases, is warranted.

8 THE COURT: I agree wholeheartedly. And Judge Seeborg  
9 knows as well, I did talk to him, as I mentioned. He indicated  
10 that he had reserved judgment but indicated that he, I think,  
11 would probably be ruling on or before August 10, I think; and  
12 that it was his view that if discovery were to go forward, it  
13 should be coordinated with discovery here if I were to allow  
14 it.

15 I agree. Ultimately I don't see why any of the folks  
16 who would be subjected to a deposition should be deposed twice  
17 in multiple actions. How to accomplish that, I don't have a  
18 settled idea on at the moment, but I would think that either  
19 you all should go back to Judge Seeborg and say in light of  
20 Judge Furman's decision we're prepared to proceed here or at  
21 least enter some sort of stipulation in that action that would  
22 allow for participation of counsel in the depositions -- I'm  
23 open to suggestions. I mean I think that counsel in all of  
24 these cases having a conversation and figuring out an orderly  
25 way to proceed is probably sensible. I will call Judge Hazel

I739stao

112a

1 but I imagine that all of the judges involved will be of the  
2 view that depositions should only be taken once and certainly  
3 if they are depositions of upper level officials those are  
4 definitely only going to happen once. So I think coordination  
5 is going to be necessary.

6 Another component of that is that I imagine there may  
7 be discovery disputes in this case, and I don't have a  
8 brilliant idea for how those get resolved, whether they get  
9 resolved by me, by Judge Seeborg, or by Judge Hazel if  
10 discovery is allowed there. I think for now they should come  
11 to me because I'm the one and only judge who has ruled on the  
12 issue. But in the event that the other judges do authorize  
13 discovery, we probably need an orderly system to resolve those  
14 issues. I don't want it to be like a child who goes to mom and  
15 doesn't get the answer that he wants and then goes to dad for  
16 reconsideration. So I think you all should give some thought  
17 to that. Again, I don't think it needs to be resolved right  
18 now because Judge Seeborg has reserved judgment on it, but I  
19 will give it some thought, as I imagine he will, and we'll talk  
20 about it.

21 Anything you all want to say on that score?

22 MR. COLANGELO: Your Honor, for the state and local  
23 government plaintiffs, I would just add that we have no  
24 objection to coordinating with plaintiffs in other cases on the  
25 timing of depositions or on their participation, if warranted.

I739stao

113a

1 Our key concern was in not having the latest decided case be  
2 the right limiting step. We think the appropriate course is  
3 the one you've taken. So assuming it's on the schedule that  
4 your Honor has proposed, we have no objection to other -- to  
5 coordinating with other plaintiffs on deposition schedules in  
6 particular.

7 THE COURT: I don't intend to wait for the other  
8 courts. I'm sure that they will be proceeding expeditiously in  
9 their own cases, but I am trying to get this case resolved in a  
10 timely fashion and in that regard don't plan to wait. So it  
11 behooves all of you to get on the phone with one another and  
12 figure out some sort of means of coordinating. You can look --  
13 I have a coordination order in the GM MDL that might provide a  
14 model and that allows for counsel in different cases to  
15 participation in depositions. This is not an MDL but there are  
16 some similarities. You may want to consider that. I'm sure  
17 there are other contexts in which these issues have arisen and  
18 you may want to look at models.

19 What I propose is why don't you submit a joint letter  
20 to me from all counsel in these cases, let's say within two  
21 weeks after you've had an opportunity to both confer with one  
22 another and confer with counsel in the other cases, and submit  
23 a joint letter to me with some sort of proposal. And if you  
24 can agree upon an order that would apply and ensure smooth  
25 coordination, all the better; and if not, you can tell me what

I739stao

114a

1 your counterproposals are and I'll consider it at that time.

2 All right.

3 MS. BAILEY: Thank you, your Honor.

4 THE COURT: Very good. Anything else?

5 MR. COLANGELO: Nothing for us, your Honor.

6 THE COURT: I wanted to just give you one heads-up. I  
7 noted from the states and local governments' letter there is an  
8 attachment which is a letter with respect to the Touhy issues  
9 in the case. As it happens, I have another case where that or  
10 some of the issues raised in that letter are actually fully  
11 submitted before me in an APA action case called Koopman v.  
12 U.S. Department of Transportation, 18 CV 3460. That matter is  
13 fully submitted. I can't and won't make any promises to you  
14 with respect to when I will issue a decision in it but it may  
15 speak to some of the issues raised in the states and local  
16 governments' letter. So you may want to keep an eye out for  
17 it.

18 With that --

19 MS. VARGAS: Your Honor, I do believe that we have --  
20 we are not going to be resting on a former employee issue which  
21 I believe is the issue in the Koopman litigation. So I don't  
22 believe that will implicate the issues that are at play in that  
23 case.

24 THE COURT: Good. Good to know. Thank you for  
25 letting me know. Then you don't need to look for it unless you

1 have some strange desire to read Judge Furman decisions.

2 On that score let me say I will try to issue a  
3 decision on the motion to dismiss in short order. I don't want  
4 to give myself a deadline. That's one prerogative of being in  
5 my job. But I do hope that I'll get it out in the next couple  
6 weeks. And it's been very helpful, the argument this morning  
7 was very helpful, and counsel did an excellent job and your  
8 briefing is quite good as well as the amicus briefing. So I  
9 appreciate that. I will reserve judgment. I wish everybody a  
10 very happy Fourth of July. We are adjourned.

11 (Adjourned)

12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25



**Supplemental Memorandum by Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross  
Regarding the Administrative Record in Census Litigation**

This memorandum is intended to provide further background and context regarding my March 26, 2018, memorandum concerning the reinstatement of a citizenship question to the decennial census. Soon after my appointment as Secretary of Commerce, I began considering various fundamental issues regarding the upcoming 2020 Census, including funding and content. Part of these considerations included whether to reinstate a citizenship question, which other senior Administration officials had previously raised. My staff and I thought reinstating a citizenship question could be warranted, and we had various discussions with other governmental officials about reinstating a citizenship question to the Census. As part of that deliberative process, my staff and I consulted with Federal governmental components and inquired whether the Department of Justice (DOJ) would support, and if so would request, inclusion of a citizenship question as consistent with and useful for enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

Ultimately, on December 12, 2017, DOJ sent a letter formally requesting that the Census Bureau reinstate on the 2020 Census questionnaire a question regarding citizenship. My March 26, 2018, memorandum described the thorough assessment process that the Department of Commerce conducted following receipt of the DOJ letter, the evidence and arguments I considered, and the factors I weighed in making my decision to include the citizenship question on the 2020 Census.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wilbur Ross".

Wilbur Ross  
June 21, 2018





To: Karen Dunn Kelley, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs

From: Secretary Wilbur Ross

Date: March 26, 2018

Re: Reinstatement of a Citizenship Question on the 2020 Decennial Census Questionnaire

Dear Under Secretary Kelley:

As you know, on December 12, 2017, the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) requested that the Census Bureau reinstate a citizenship question on the decennial census to provide census block level citizenship voting age population (“CVAP”) data that are not currently available from government survey data (“DOJ request”). DOJ and the courts use CVAP data for determining violations of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (“VRA”), and having these data at the census block level will permit more effective enforcement of the Act. Section 2 protects minority population voting rights.

Following receipt of the DOJ request, I set out to take a hard look at the request and ensure that I considered all facts and data relevant to the question so that I could make an informed decision on how to respond. To that end, the Department of Commerce (“Department”) immediately initiated a comprehensive review process led by the Census Bureau.

The Department and Census Bureau’s review of the DOJ request – as with all significant Census assessments – prioritized the goal of obtaining *complete and accurate data*. The decennial census is mandated in the Constitution and its data are relied on for a myriad of important government decisions, including apportionment of Congressional seats among states, enforcement of voting rights laws, and allocation of federal funds. These are foundational elements of our democracy, and it is therefore incumbent upon the Department and the Census Bureau to make every effort to provide a complete and accurate decennial census.

At my direction, the Census Bureau and the Department’s Office of the Secretary began a thorough assessment that included legal, program, and policy considerations. As part of the process, I also met with Census Bureau leadership on multiple occasions to discuss their process for reviewing the DOJ request, their data analysis, my questions about accuracy and response rates, and their recommendations. At present, the Census Bureau leadership are all career civil servants. In addition, my staff and I reviewed over 50 incoming letters from stakeholders, interest groups, Members of Congress, and state and local officials regarding reinstatement of a citizenship question on the 2020 decennial census, and I personally had specific conversations on

the citizenship question with over 24 diverse, well informed and interested parties representing a broad range of views. My staff and I have also monitored press coverage of this issue.

Congress has delegated to me the authority to determine which questions should be asked on the decennial census, and I may exercise my discretion to reinstate the citizenship question on the 2020 decennial census, especially based on DOJ's request for improved CVAP data to enforce the VRA. By law, the list of decennial census questions is to be submitted two years prior to the decennial census – in this case, no later than March 31, 2018.

The Department's review demonstrated that collection of citizenship data by the Census has been a long-standing historical practice. Prior decennial census surveys of the entire United States population consistently asked citizenship questions up until 1950, and Census Bureau surveys of sample populations continue to ask citizenship questions to this day. In 2000, the decennial census "long form" survey, which was distributed to one in six people in the U.S., included a question on citizenship. Following the 2000 decennial census, the "long form" sample was replaced by the American Community Survey ("ACS"), which has included a citizenship question since 2005. Therefore, the citizenship question has been well tested.

DOJ seeks to obtain CVAP data for census blocks, block groups, counties, towns, and other locations where potential Section 2 violations are alleged or suspected, and DOJ states that the current data collected under the ACS are insufficient in scope, detail, and certainty to meet its purpose under the VRA. The Census Bureau has advised me that the census-block-level citizenship data requested by DOJ are not available using the annual ACS, which as noted earlier does ask a citizenship question and is the present method used to provide DOJ and the courts with data used to enforce Section 2 of the VRA. The ACS is sent on an annual basis to a sample of approximately 2.6 percent of the population.

To provide the data requested by DOJ, the Census Bureau initially analyzed three alternatives: Option A was to continue the status quo and use ACS responses; Option B was placing the ACS citizenship question on the decennial census, which goes to every American household; and Option C was not placing a question on the decennial census and instead providing DOJ with a citizenship analysis for the entire population using federal administrative record data that Census has agreements with other agencies to access for statistical purposes.

**Option A** contemplates rejection of the DOJ request and represents the status quo baseline. Under Option A, the 2020 decennial census would not include the question on citizenship that DOJ requested and therefore would not provide DOJ with improved CVAP data. Additionally, the block-group level CVAP data currently obtained through the ACS has associated margins of error because the ACS is extrapolated based on sample surveys of the population. Providing more precise block-level data would require sophisticated statistical modeling, and if Option A is selected, the Census Bureau advised that it would need to deploy a team of experts to develop model-based methods that attempt to better facilitate DOJ's request for more specific data. But the Census Bureau did not assert and could not confirm that such data modeling is possible for census-block-level data with a sufficient degree of accuracy. Regardless, DOJ's request is based at least in part on the fact that existing ACS citizenship data-sets lack specificity and

completeness. Any future modeling from these incomplete data would only compound that problem.

Option A would provide no improved citizenship count, as the existing ACS sampling would still fail to obtain *actual*, complete number counts, especially for certain lower population areas or voting districts, and there is no guarantee that data could be improved using small-area modeling methods. Therefore, I have concluded that Option A is not a suitable option.

The Census Bureau and many stakeholders expressed concern that **Option B**, which would add a citizenship question to the decennial census, would negatively impact the response rate for non-citizens. A significantly lower response rate by non-citizens could reduce the accuracy of the decennial census and increase costs for non-response follow up (“NRFU”) operations. However, neither the Census Bureau nor the concerned stakeholders could document that the response rate would in fact decline materially. In discussing the question with the national survey agency Nielsen, it stated that it had added questions from the ACS on sensitive topics such as place of birth and immigration status to certain short survey forms without any appreciable decrease in response rates. Further, the former director of the Census Bureau during the last decennial census told me that, while he wished there were data to answer the question, none existed to his knowledge. Nielsen’s Senior Vice President for Data Science and the former Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Census Bureau under President George W. Bush also confirmed that, to the best of their knowledge, no empirical data existed on the impact of a citizenship question on responses.

When analyzing Option B, the Census Bureau attempted to assess the impact that reinstatement of a citizenship question on the decennial census would have on response rates by drawing comparisons to ACS responses. However, such comparative analysis was challenging, as response rates generally vary between decennial censuses and other census sample surveys. For example, ACS self-response rates were 3.1 percentage points less than self-response rates for the 2010 decennial census. The Bureau attributed this difference to the greater outreach and follow-up associated with the Constitutionally-mandated decennial census. Further, the decennial census has differed significantly in nature from the sample surveys. For example, the 2000 decennial census survey contained only eight questions. Conversely, the 2000 “long form” sample survey contained over 50 questions, and the Census Bureau estimated it took an average of over 30 minutes to complete. ACS surveys include over 45 questions on numerous topics, including the number of hours worked, income information, and housing characteristics.

The Census Bureau determined that, for 2013-2016 ACS surveys, nonresponses to the citizenship question for non-Hispanic whites ranged from 6.0 to 6.3 percent, for non-Hispanic blacks ranged from 12.0 to 12.6 percent, and for Hispanics ranged from 11.6 to 12.3 percent. However, these rates were comparable to nonresponse rates for other questions on the 2013 and 2016 ACS. Census Bureau estimates showed similar nonresponse rate ranges occurred for questions on the ACS asking the number times the respondent was married, 4.7 to 6.9 percent; educational attainment, 5.6 to 8.5 percent; monthly gas costs, 9.6 to 9.9 percent; weeks worked in the past 12 months, 6.9 to 10.6 percent; wages/salary income, 8.1 to 13.4 percent; and yearly property insurance, 23.9 to 25.6 percent.

The Census Bureau also compared the self-response rate differences between citizen and non-citizen households' response rates for the 2000 decennial census short form (which did not include a citizenship question) and the 2000 decennial census long form survey (the long form survey, distributed to only one in six households, included a citizenship question in 2000). Census found the decline in self-response rates for non-citizens to be 3.3 percent greater than for citizen households. However, Census was not able to isolate what percentage of decline was caused by the inclusion of a citizenship question rather than some other aspect of the long form survey (it contained over six times as many questions covering a range of topics). Indeed, the Census Bureau analysis showed that for the 2000 decennial census there was a significant drop in self response rates overall between the short and long form; the mail response rate was 66.4 percent for the short form and only 53.9 percent for the long form survey. So while there is widespread belief among many parties that adding a citizenship question could reduce response rates, the Census Bureau's analysis did not provide definitive, empirical support for that belief.

**Option C**, the use of administrative records rather than placing a citizenship question on the decennial census, was a potentially appealing solution to the DOJ request. The use of administrative records is increasingly part of the fabric and design of modern censuses, and the Census Bureau has been using administrative record data to improve the accuracy and reduce the cost of censuses since the early 20th century. A Census Bureau analysis matching administrative records with the 2010 decennial census and ACS responses over several more recent years showed that using administrative records could be more accurate than self-responses in the case of non-citizens. That Census Bureau analysis showed that between 28 and 34 percent of the citizenship self-responses for persons that administrative records show are non-citizens were inaccurate. In other words, when non-citizens respond to long form or ACS questions on citizenship, they inaccurately mark "citizen" about 30 percent of the time. However, the Census Bureau is still evolving its use of administrative records, and the Bureau does not yet have a complete administrative records data set for the entire population. Thus, using administrative records alone to provide DOJ with CVAP data would provide an incomplete picture. In the 2010 decennial census, the Census Bureau was able to match 88.6 percent of the population with what the Bureau considers credible administrative record data. While impressive, this means that more than 10 percent of the American population – some 25 million voting age people – would need to have their citizenship imputed by the Census Bureau. Given the scale of this number, it was imperative that another option be developed to provide a greater level of accuracy than either self-response alone or use of administrative records alone would presently provide.

I therefore asked the Census Bureau to develop a fourth alternative, **Option D**, which would combine Options B and C. Under Option D, the ACS citizenship question would be asked on the decennial census, and the Census Bureau would use the two years remaining until the 2020 decennial census to further enhance its administrative record data sets, protocols, and statistical models to provide more complete and accurate data. This approach would maximize the Census Bureau's ability to match the decennial census responses with administrative records. Accordingly, at my direction the Census Bureau is working to obtain as many additional Federal and state administrative records as possible to provide more comprehensive information for the population.

It is my judgment that Option D will provide DOJ with the most complete and accurate CVAP data in response to its request. Asking the citizenship question of 100 percent of the population gives each respondent the opportunity to provide an answer. This may eliminate the need for the Census Bureau to have to impute an answer for millions of people. For the approximately 90 percent of the population who are citizens, this question is no additional imposition. And for the approximately 70 percent of non-citizens who already answer this question accurately on the ACS, the question is no additional imposition since census responses by law may only be used anonymously and for statistical purposes. Finally, placing the question on the decennial census and directing the Census Bureau to determine the best means to compare the decennial census responses with administrative records will permit the Census Bureau to determine the inaccurate response rate for citizens and non-citizens alike using the entire population. This will enable the Census Bureau to establish, to the best of its ability, the accurate ratio of citizen to non-citizen responses to impute for that small percentage of cases where it is necessary to do so.

**Consideration of Impacts** I have carefully considered the argument that the reinstatement of the citizenship question on the decennial census would depress response rate. Because a lower response rate would lead to increased non-response follow-up costs and less accurate responses, this factor was an important consideration in the decision-making process. I find that the need for accurate citizenship data and the limited burden that the reinstatement of the citizenship question would impose outweigh fears about a potentially lower response rate.

Importantly, the Department's review found that limited empirical evidence exists about whether adding a citizenship question would decrease response rates materially. Concerns about decreased response rates generally fell into the following two categories – distrust of government and increased burden. First, stakeholders, particularly those who represented immigrant constituencies, noted that members of their respective communities generally distrusted the government and especially distrusted efforts by government agencies to obtain information about them. Stakeholders from California referenced the difficulty that government agencies faced obtaining any information from immigrants as part of the relief efforts after the California wildfires. These government agencies were not seeking to ascertain the citizenship status of these wildfire victims. Other stakeholders referenced the political climate generally and fears that Census responses could be used for law enforcement purposes. But no one provided evidence that reinstating a citizenship question on the decennial census would materially decrease response rates among those who generally distrusted government and government information collection efforts, disliked the current administration, or feared law enforcement. Rather, stakeholders merely identified residents who made the decision not to participate regardless of whether the Census includes a citizenship question. The reinstatement of a citizenship question will not decrease the response rate of residents who already decided not to respond. And no one provided evidence that there are residents who would respond accurately to a decennial census that did not contain a citizenship question but would not respond if it did (although many believed that such residents had to exist). While it is possible this belief is true, there is no information available to determine the number of people who would in fact not respond due to a citizenship question being added, and no one has identified any mechanism for making such a determination.

A second concern that stakeholders advanced is that recipients are generally less likely to respond to a survey that contained more questions than one that contained fewer. The former Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Census Bureau during the George W. Bush administration described the decennial census as particularly fragile and stated that any effort to add questions risked lowering the response rate, especially a question about citizenship in the current political environment. However, there is limited empirical evidence to support this view. A former Census Bureau Director during the Obama Administration who oversaw the last decennial census noted as much. He stated that, even though he believed that the reinstatement of a citizenship question would decrease response rate, there is limited evidence to support this conclusion. This same former director noted that, in the years preceding the decennial census, certain interest groups consistently attack the census and discourage participation. While the reinstatement of a citizenship question may be a data point on which these interest groups seize in 2019, past experience demonstrates that it is likely efforts to undermine the decennial census will occur again regardless of whether the decennial census includes a citizenship question. There is no evidence that residents who are persuaded by these disruptive efforts are more or less likely to make their respective decisions about participation based specifically on the reinstatement of a citizenship question. And there are actions that the Census Bureau and stakeholder groups are taking to mitigate the impact of these attacks on the decennial census.

Additional empirical evidence about the impact of sensitive questions on survey response rates came from the SVP of Data Science at Nielsen. When Nielsen added questions on place of birth and time of arrival in the United States (both of which were taken from the ACS) to a short survey, the response rate was not materially different than it had been before these two questions were added. Similarly, the former Deputy Director and COO of the Census during the George W. Bush Administration shared an example of a citizenship-like question that he believed would negatively impact response rates but did not. He cited to the Department of Homeland Security's 2004 request to the Census Bureau to provide aggregate data on the number of Arab Americans by zip code in certain areas of the country. The Census Bureau complied, and Census employees, including the then-Deputy Director, believed that the resulting political firestorm would depress response rates for further Census Bureau surveys in the impacted communities. But the response rate did not change materially.

Two other themes emerged from stakeholder calls that merit discussion. First, several stakeholders who opposed reinstatement of the citizenship question did not appreciate that the question had been asked in some form or another for nearly 200 years. Second, other stakeholders who opposed reinstatement did so based on the assumption that the data on citizenship that the Census Bureau collects through the ACS are accurate, thereby obviating the need to ask the question on the decennial census. But as discussed above, the Census Bureau estimates that between 28 and 34 percent of citizenship self-responses on the ACS for persons that administrative records show are non-citizens were inaccurate. Because these stakeholder concerns were based on incorrect premises, they are not sufficient to change my decision.

Finally, I have considered whether reinstating the citizenship question on the 2020 Census will lead to any significant monetary costs, programmatic or otherwise. The Census Bureau staff have advised that the costs of preparing and adding the question would be minimal due in large part to the fact that the citizenship question is already included on the ACS, and thus the citizenship question has already undergone the cognitive research and questionnaire testing required for new questions. Additionally, changes to the Internet Self-Response instrument, revising the Census Questionnaire Assistance, and redesigning of the printed questionnaire can be easily implemented for questions that are finalized prior to the submission of the list of questions to Congress.

The Census Bureau also considered whether non-response follow-up increases resulting from inclusion of the citizenship question would lead to increased costs. As noted above, this estimate was difficult to assess given the Census Bureau and Department's inability to determine what impact there will be on decennial census survey responses. The Bureau provided a rough estimate that postulated that up to 630,000 additional households may require NRFU operations if a citizenship question is added to the 2020 decennial census. However, even assuming that estimate is correct, this additional ½ percent increase in NRFU operations falls well within the margin of error that the Department, with the support of the Census Bureau, provided to Congress in the revised Lifecycle Cost Estimate ("LCE") this past fall. That LCE assumed that NRFU operations might increase by 3 percent due to numerous factors, including a greater increase in citizen mistrust of government, difficulties in accessing the Internet to respond, and other factors.

Inclusion of a citizenship question on this country's decennial census is not new – the decision to collect citizenship information from Americans through the decennial census was first made centuries ago. The decision to include a citizenship question on a national census is also not uncommon. The United Nations recommends that its member countries ask census questions identifying both an individual's country of birth and the country of citizenship. *Principals and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (Revision 3)*, UNITED NATIONS 121 (2017). Additionally, for countries in which the population may include a large portion of naturalized citizens, the United Nations notes that, "it may be important to collect information on the method of acquisition of citizenship." *Id.* at 123. And it is important to note that other major democracies inquire about citizenship on their census, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, Spain, and the United Kingdom, to name a few.

The Department of Commerce is not able to determine definitively how inclusion of a citizenship question on the decennial census will impact responsiveness. However, even if there is some impact on responses, the value of more complete and accurate data derived from surveying the entire population outweighs such concerns. Completing and returning decennial census questionnaires is required by Federal law, those responses are protected by law, and inclusion of a citizenship question on the 2020 decennial census will provide more complete information for those who respond. The citizenship data provided to DOJ will be more accurate with the question than without it, which is of greater importance than any adverse effect that may result from people violating their legal duty to respond.

To conclude, after a thorough review of the legal, program, and policy considerations, as well as numerous discussions with the Census Bureau leadership and interested stakeholders, I have determined that reinstatement of a citizenship question on the 2020 decennial census is necessary to provide complete and accurate data in response to the DOJ request. To minimize any impact on decennial census response rates, I am directing the Census Bureau to place the citizenship question last on the decennial census form.

Please make my decision known to Census Bureau personnel and Members of Congress prior to March 31, 2018. I look forward to continuing to work with the Census Bureau as we strive for a complete and accurate 2020 decennial census.

CC: Ron Jarmin, performing the nonexclusive functions and duties of the Director of the Census Bureau

Enrique Lamas, performing the nonexclusive functions and duties of the Deputy Director of the Census Bureau





**U.S. Department of Justice**  
Justice Management Division  
*Office of General Counsel*

Washington, D.C. 20530

**DEC 12 2017**

**VIA CERTIFIED RETURN RECEIPT**

**7014 2120 0000 8064 4964**

Dr. Ron Jarmin  
Performing the Non-Exclusive Functions and Duties of the Director  
U.S. Census Bureau  
United States Department of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20233-0001

Re: Request To Reinstate Citizenship Question On 2020 Census Questionnaire

Dear Dr. Jarmin:

The Department of Justice is committed to robust and evenhanded enforcement of the Nation's civil rights laws and to free and fair elections for all Americans. In furtherance of that commitment, I write on behalf of the Department to formally request that the Census Bureau reinstate on the 2020 Census questionnaire a question regarding citizenship, formerly included in the so-called "long form" census. This data is critical to the Department's enforcement of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and its important protections against racial discrimination in voting. To fully enforce those requirements, the Department needs a reliable calculation of the citizen voting-age population in localities where voting rights violations are alleged or suspected. As demonstrated below, the decennial census questionnaire is the most appropriate vehicle for collecting that data, and reinstating a question on citizenship will best enable the Department to protect all American citizens' voting rights under Section 2.

The Supreme Court has held that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits "vote dilution" by state and local jurisdictions engaged in redistricting, which can occur when a racial group is improperly deprived of a single-member district in which it could form a majority. See *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30, 50 (1986). Multiple federal courts of appeals have held that, where citizenship rates are at issue in a vote-dilution case, citizen voting-age population is the proper metric for determining whether a racial group could constitute a majority in a single-member district. See, e.g., *Reyes v. City of Farmers Branch*, 586 F.3d 1019, 1023-24 (5th Cir. 2009); *Barnett v. City of Chicago*, 141 F.3d 699, 704 (7th Cir. 1998); *Negrn v. City of Miami Beach*, 113 F.3d 1563, 1567-69 (11th Cir. 1997); *Romero v. City of Pomona*, 883 F.2d 1418, 1426 (9th Cir. 1989), *overruled in part on other grounds by Townsend v. Holman Consulting Corp.*, 914 F.2d 1136, 1141 (9th Cir. 1990); see also *LULAC v. Perry*, 548 U.S. 399, 423-442 (2006) (analyzing vote-dilution claim by reference to citizen voting-age population).

The purpose of Section 2's vote-dilution prohibition "is to facilitate participation ... in our political process" by preventing unlawful dilution of the vote on the basis of race. *Campos v. City of Houston*, 113 F.3d 544, 548 (5th Cir. 1997). Importantly, "[t]he plain language of section 2 of the Voting Rights Act makes clear that its protections apply to United States citizens." *Id.* Indeed, courts have reasoned that "[t]he right to vote is one of the badges of citizenship" and that "[t]he dignity and very concept of citizenship are diluted if noncitizens are allowed to vote." *Barnett*, 141 F.3d at 704. Thus, it would be the wrong result for a legislature or a court to draw a single-member district in which a numerical racial minority group in a jurisdiction was a majority of the total voting-age population in that district but "continued to be defeated at the polls" because it was not a majority of the citizen voting-age population. *Campos*, 113 F.3d at 548.

These cases make clear that, in order to assess and enforce compliance with Section 2's protection against discrimination in voting, the Department needs to be able to obtain citizen voting-age population data for census blocks, block groups, counties, towns, and other locations where potential Section 2 violations are alleged or suspected. From 1970 to 2000, the Census Bureau included a citizenship question on the so-called "long form" questionnaire that it sent to approximately one in every six households during each decennial census. See, e.g., U.S. Census Bureau, *Summary File 3: 2000 Census of Population & Housing—Appendix B at B-7* (July 2007), available at <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf> (last visited Nov. 22, 2017); U.S. Census Bureau, *Index of Questions*, available at [https://www.census.gov/history/www/through\\_the\\_decades/index\\_of\\_questions/](https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/index_of_questions/) (last visited Nov. 22, 2017). For years, the Department used the data collected in response to that question in assessing compliance with Section 2 and in litigation to enforce Section 2's protections against racial discrimination in voting.

In the 2010 Census, however, no census questionnaire included a question regarding citizenship. Rather, following the 2000 Census, the Census Bureau discontinued the "long form" questionnaire and replaced it with the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is a sampling survey that is sent to only around one in every thirty-eight households each year and asks a variety of questions regarding demographic information, including citizenship. See U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey Information Guide at 6*, available at [https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/about/ACS Information Guide.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/about/ACS%20Information%20Guide.pdf) (last visited Nov. 22, 2017). The ACS is currently the Census Bureau's only survey that collects information regarding citizenship and estimates citizen voting-age population.

The 2010 redistricting cycle was the first cycle in which the ACS estimates provided the Census Bureau's only citizen voting-age population data. The Department and state and local jurisdictions therefore have used those ACS estimates for this redistricting cycle. The ACS, however, does not yield the ideal data for such purposes for several reasons:

- Jurisdictions conducting redistricting, and the Department in enforcing Section 2, already use the total population data from the census to determine compliance with the Constitution's one-person, one-vote requirement, see *Evenwel v. Abbott*, 136 S. Ct. 1120 (Apr. 4, 2016). As a result, using the ACS citizenship estimates means relying on two different data sets, the scope and level of detail of which vary quite significantly.

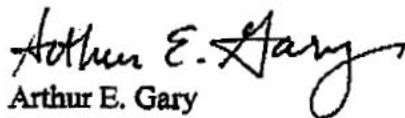
- Because the ACS estimates are rolling and aggregated into one-year, three-year, and five-year estimates, they do not align in time with the decennial census data. Citizenship data from the decennial census, by contrast, would align in time with the total and voting-age population data from the census that jurisdictions already use in redistricting.
- The ACS estimates are reported at a ninety percent confidence level, and the margin of error increases as the sample size—and, thus, the geographic area—decreases. See U.S. Census Bureau, *Glossary: Confidence interval (American Community Survey)*, available at [https://www.census.gov/glossary/#term\\_ConfidenceintervalAmericanCommunitySurvey](https://www.census.gov/glossary/#term_ConfidenceintervalAmericanCommunitySurvey) (last visited November 22, 2017). By contrast, decennial census data is a full count of the population.
- Census data is reported to the census block level, while the smallest unit reported in the ACS estimates is the census block group. See *American Community Survey Data* 3, 5, 10. Accordingly, redistricting jurisdictions and the Department are required to perform further estimates and to interject further uncertainty in order to approximate citizen voting-age population at the level of a census block, which is the fundamental building block of a redistricting plan. Having all of the relevant population and citizenship data available in one data set at the census block level would greatly assist the redistricting process.

For all of these reasons, the Department believes that decennial census questionnaire data regarding citizenship, if available, would be more appropriate for use in redistricting and in Section 2 litigation than the ACS citizenship estimates.

Accordingly, the Department formally requests that the Census Bureau reinstate into the 2020 Census a question regarding citizenship. We also request that the Census Bureau release this new data regarding citizenship at the same time as it releases the other redistricting data, by April 1 following the 2020 Census. At the same time, the Department requests that the Bureau also maintain the citizenship question on the ACS, since such question is necessary, *inter alia*, to yield information for the periodic determinations made by the Bureau under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. § 10503.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this letter or wish to discuss this request. I can be reached at (202) 514-3452, or at [Arthur.Gary@usdoj.gov](mailto:Arthur.Gary@usdoj.gov).

Sincerely yours,



Arthur E. Gary  
General Counsel  
Justice Management Division

---

**From:** Comstock, Earl (Federal) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 5/2/2017 2:19:11 PM  
**To:** Wilbur Ross [REDACTED]  
**CC:** Herbst, Ellen (Federal) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Census

I agree Mr Secretary.

On the citizenship question we will get that in place. The broad topics were what were sent to Congress earlier this year as required. It is next March -- in 2018 -- when the final 2020 decennial Census questions are submitted to Congress. We need to work with Justice to get them to request that citizenship be added back as a census question, and we have the court cases to illustrate that DoJ has a legitimate need for the question to be included. I will arrange a meeting with DoJ staff this week to discuss.

Earl

Sent from my iPhone

> On May 2, 2017, at 10:04 AM, Wilbur Ross <wlr@doc.gov> wrote:  
>

[REDACTED]

Worst of all they emphasize that they have settled with congress on the questions to be asked. I am mystified why nothing have been done in response to my months old request that we include the citizenship question. Why not? [REDACTED]

> Sent from my iPhone

S.D.N.Y.-N.Y.C.  
18-cv-2921  
18-cv-5025  
Furman, J.

United States Court of Appeals  
FOR THE  
SECOND CIRCUIT

---

At a stated term of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, held at the Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse, 40 Foley Square, in the City of New York, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October, two thousand eighteen.

Present:

Pierre N. Leval,  
Rosemary S. Pooler,  
Richard C. Wesley,  
*Circuit Judges.*

---

In Re: United States Department of Commerce, Wilbur L. Ross, in his official capacity as Secretary of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, an agency within the United States Department of Commerce, Ron S. Jarmin, in his capacity as the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau,	18-2652 18-2659 18-2856 18-2857
---	--

*Petitioners.*

---

Petitioners request a stay of discovery in Nos. 18-2652 and 18-2659, including the deposition of Acting Assistant Attorney General Gore, pending review by the Supreme Court. We have considered the relevant factors and conclude that a stay in those cases is not warranted. *See U.S. S.E.C. v. Citigroup Glob. Mkts. Inc.*, 673 F.3d 158, 162 (2d Cir. 2012). Upon due consideration, it is hereby ORDERED that the request for a stay is DENIED.

FOR THE COURT:  
Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe, Clerk of Court

  
Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe

