Democracy at Risk: 
The State of the 2020 Census

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NALEO Educational Fund Independent Assessment of the End-to-End (E-T-E) Test

**SURVEY** of representative sample of Providence County residents.

**INTERVIEWS** with elected officials and community leaders.

**OUR PARTNERS** were Dr. Kevin Escudero, Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies at Brown University, in collaboration with Gabriela Domenzain, President, Somos Humanos.

**MAJOR FINDINGS:**

- Survey respondents, elected officials and community leaders agree that citizenship question will depress participation in Census 2020.

- Latinos generally preferred to participate in E-T-E by mail or in-person; particularly salient because December 2018 GAO report raised serious concerns about Bureau’s in-person follow-up operations during the E-T-E.

- Spanish-language accessibility and outreach are imperative; personal networks and social media play an important role in reaching Latinos.
Administration’s last minute addition of a Citizenship Question puts Census 2020 at serious risk

Is this person a citizen of the United States?

- Yes, born in the United States
- Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas
- Yes, born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents
- Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization – Print year of naturalization
- No, not a U.S. citizen
Two-question format on Race and Hispanic origin for Census 2020 raises questions

- Only one Latino national origin will be reported by Census Bureau regardless of how respondents answer.

- Unclear how Latinos will be respond to detailed reporting of White and Black sub-group identifications; Afro-Caribbean examples not included in Black/African American question.

- Census Bureau projects that with this approach, “Some other race” will become second largest racial group in the nation after Census 2020.
Focus group participants had a generally positive view of the Census; but when they saw version of actual questionnaire, hesitation, fear, lack of confidence arose.

Survey respondents overwhelmingly expressed a preference to complete the Census by mail on a paper form (75 percent).

Messages about Census participation being “Convenient, Safe and Required” showed the most positive response in the survey.

Messages about the role of Census data in providing funding for local schools and community programs were the most effective in the focus groups.

“Family Members” were the most trusted messengers.

Nurses, doctors, health providers, Latino community organizations were also highly trusted as messengers.

People who speak for “the children” or “the schools” – such as teachers - were especially trusted and convincing.
Thank you.

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