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LRB100 20913 MST 36442 r

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, In 2011, the General Assembly enacted the Illinois
3 Voting Rights Act to require legislative and representative
4 districts drawn after each decennial redistricting plan
5 pursuant to Article IV, Section 3 of the Illinois Constitution
6 to create crossover districts, coalition districts, or
7 influence districts so long drawing these districts would not
8 conflict the United States Constitution, any federal law
9 regarding redistricting Legislative Districts or
10 Representative Districts, including but not limited to the
11 federal Voting Rights Act, or the Illinois Constitution; and

12 WHEREAS, The purpose of the Illinois Voting Rights Act, as
13 explained by the federal court decision upholding it, is to
14 "prevent what is commonly known as the 'facturering' of
15 minority voting districts" and protect the voting rights of
16 racial and language minorities; and

17 WHEREAS, Illinois has a significant interest in ensuring
18 that the United States Census Bureau conducts its 2020
19 decennial census in a manner to fully and accurately count "the
20 whole number of persons in each State" in order to ensure
21 Illinois' fair representation in Congress, its influence in the
22 Electoral College, its fair share of federal funds based on
23 Census data, and its compliance with the Illinois Voting Rights

1 Act's requirement to draw state legislative and representative
2 districts in a manner that protects the voting rights of racial
3 and language minorities; and

4 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Justice has
5 requested that the United States Census Bureau reinstate a
6 question on citizenship to the 2020 census, claiming that the
7 data is critical to the Department's enforcement of Section 2
8 of the Voting Rights Act and the important protections it
9 provides against racial discrimination in voting; and

10 WHEREAS, The Department of Justice states it needs a
11 reliable calculation of the citizen voting age population in
12 localities where voting rights are alleged or suspected; and

13 WHEREAS, Experts agree that since the same question is
14 included in the American Community Survey it is adequate to
15 fulfill the Department of Justice's stated purpose of enforcing
16 the Voting Rights Act; and

17 WHEREAS, The Attorneys General of 17 states, including
18 Illinois, and the District of Columbia, and the Governor of
19 Colorado recently sent a joint letter opposing the Department
20 of Justice's request to the Secretary of the United States
21 Department of Commerce, which oversees the Census Bureau; and

1 WHEREAS, The Attorneys General's joint letter correctly
2 explains how adding a citizenship question would significantly
3 depress participation in the 2020 decennial census and cause a
4 population undercount that would disproportionately harm
5 states and cities with large immigrant communities; and

6 WHEREAS, The Attorney General's joint letter further
7 explains how adding a citizenship question would frustrate the
8 Census Bureau's obligation under the U.S. Constitution to
9 determine "the whole number of persons in each state", threaten
10 the fair representation of their states in Congress, dilute the
11 influence of their states in the Electoral College, and deprive
12 their states of their fair share of hundreds of billions
13 dollars in federal funds allocated based upon Census data; and

14 WHEREAS, The Attorney General's joint letter rightly
15 points out that the Census Bureau itself has previously
16 explained that "any effort to ascertain citizenship" in the
17 decennial Census "will inevitably jeopardize the overall
18 accuracy of the population count"; and

19 WHEREAS, Four former Directors of the Census Bureau -
20 appointed by Presidents of both political parties - explained
21 in a brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court less than three
22 years ago that "a one-by-one citizenship inquiry would
23 invariably lead to a lower response rate to the Census in

1 general" and would "seriously frustrate the Census Bureau's
2 ability to conduct the only count the Constitution expressly
3 requires"; and

4 WHEREAS, It is abundantly clear that reinstating a
5 citizenship question will lead to comprehensive inaccuracies,
6 including how congressional, state, and local legislative
7 districts are drawn and how government funds are distributed;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, U.S. senators have asked the current presidential
10 administration to reject the request since it could depress or
11 hinder census turnout due to fear that the government could use
12 the information against the participants and since the question
13 has not been asked by the Census Bureau since 1950; and

14 WHEREAS, Reinstating this question will have the
15 unintended effect of increasing the Census Bureau's costs and
16 budget to conduct the census, as the Bureau must send out
17 enumerators to interview the occupants of any address that did
18 not respond; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
21 CONCURRING HEREIN, that we strongly urge the Secretary of
22 Commerce to reject the U.S. Department of Justice's request to

1 include the citizenship question in the 2020 census; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
4 delivered to the Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary of the U.S.
5 Department of Commerce, and each member of the Illinois
6 Congressional Delegation.