President Donald Trump announced that the Administration will not be proceeding with any further census litigation. The 2020 Decennial Census, which is already being printed, will be sent out without a citizenship question. Nevertheless, President Trump does want to obtain statistics on the number of residents in the country who are and are not U.S. citizens. By means of an executive order, he is eliminating “obstacles to data sharing” and asking all government agencies to immediately hand over any and all relevant statistics and numbers to the Commerce Department. The President said that the Commerce Department will use this data, including data from the Social Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security, to come up with an even more accurate count of citizens, non-citizens, and undocumented individuals than the citizenship question on the census would have yielded. The President indicated that this count will affect an “array of policy decisions” possibly including apportionment.

In his statement, the President made his view clear that people should be proud and glad to declare that they are U.S. citizens. Indeed, USCIS statistics indicate that
naturalization applications skyrocketed just prior to the 2016 election – more green card holders want to become U.S. citizens. There are approximately 740,000 pending naturalization applications. In the New York area alone the backlog is anywhere from 12 months to 24 months. Additional evidence of delays is seen in the number of lawsuits that are being filed in federal district courts due to these unreasonable delays. These lawsuits are at a **10-year high**.

In what appear to be further attempts to restrict the processes for obtaining U.S. citizenship, the Administration has suggested that birthright citizenship could be limited, created a task force to “denaturalize” U.S. citizens who may have lied (intentionally or non-intentionally) on the citizenship applications, opposed creating a path to citizenship for DACA and TPS recipients, and been denying passports to individuals by questioning the validity of their birth certificates.

We will continue to follow how the new Commerce Department figures will account for all of the non-citizens who since 2015 have been trying become U.S. citizens and have been blocked by new USCIS policies that have created widespread delays.

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