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Columbus Joins Lawsuit Against Trump for Administration's Latest Attempt to Thwart Census

COLUMBUS – Today, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City has joined a large coalition of states, cities, and counties – led by New York Attorney General Letitia James – in filing a lawsuit* against President Donald Trump for his latest attempt to illegally erase millions of people from the census.

The lawsuit seeks to stop the Trump administration from politicizing the census and instead aims to ensure the administration counts the “whole number of persons” residing in the country for apportionment, as the U.S. Constitution requires.

“Once again, the Trump administration is attacking our immigrant communities and undermining our cities,” said Klein. “As required by the United States Constitution, every person living in this country must be counted by the census. Suggesting otherwise threatens millions of dollars in federal funding for cities like Columbus.”

The Constitution says that, for purposes of apportioning members of the House of Representatives among the states, every person residing in the U.S. during the census – regardless of legal status – must be counted. Yet, this week President Trump declared, in a presidential memorandum, his intent to exclude undocumented immigrants from the apportionment base. This is the first time such action has been taken in our nation's history.

This effort by Trump is the latest in this administration's illegal maneuvers to manipulate the census count and congressional apportionment. In 2018, Secretary Ross directed the Census Bureau to use the 2020 census to demand information on the citizenship status of every resident in the country. Columbus was a plaintiff in the legal battle against the administration that made its way through multiple federal courts last year. Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and prohibited the Trump administration from adding a citizenship question to the census.

In today's lawsuit, the coalition argues that apportionment based on a population count that unlawfully excludes undocumented immigrants will:

- Lead to the loss of congressional seats and presidential electors in the Electoral College
- Skew the division of electoral districts within jurisdictions by impairing state and local redistricting efforts that rely on the census count
- Reduce federal funds to state and local jurisdictions by deterring immigrants from responding to the decennial census that is currently underway
- Degrade the quality of census data that states and local jurisdictions rely on to perform critical governmental functions

The coalition also makes clear that public statements and actions by President Trump and his administration have established that the rationale for excluding undocumented immigrants from the apportionment base has always been motivated by racial animus against immigrants of color, and a desire to curb the political power of immigrant communities of color.

Joining Columbus and New York in filing today's lawsuit are the attorneys general of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia. The attorneys general are joined by the cities of Central Falls, RI; Chicago, IL; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix, AZ; Pittsburgh, PA; Providence, RI; Seattle, WA; and the city and county of San Francisco. Additionally, Cameron, El Paso, and Hidalgo Counties in Texas and Monterey County in California have joined the lawsuit.

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****Editor's note: [A copy of the lawsuit is attached.](#)***