

World News Roundup

Census

Census turmoil

Trump again pursues 'citizenship' question

WASHINGTON, July 4, (RTRS): US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he was moving ahead with adding a contentious citizenship question to the 2020 U.S. census in a dramatic reversal after his own administration including Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced a day earlier that the plan had been dropped.

Following Trump's announcement, made in a defiant Twitter post, a senior US Justice Department lawyer told a Maryland-based federal judge overseeing litigation in the matter that the administration was seeking a "path forward" to add a citizenship question after the Supreme Court last Thursday blocked it, at least temporarily.

The Supreme Court found that administration officials had given a "contrived" rationale for including the query in the decennial population survey, but the court left open the possibility the administration could offer a plausible rationale.

Facing a deadline to get the census forms printed, administration officials including Ross said on Tuesday they were going ahead without including the question.

Critics have called the citizenship question a Republican ploy to scare immigrants into not taking part in the census and engineer a population undercount in Democratic-leaning areas with high immigrant and Latino populations. That would benefit non-Hispanic whites and help Trump's fellow Republicans gain seats in the US House of Representatives and state legislatures when new electoral district boundaries are drawn after the census, the critics said.

"The News Reports about the Department of Commerce dropping its quest to put the Citizenship Question on the Census is incorrect or, to state it differently, FAKE! We are absolutely moving forward, as we must, because of the importance of the answer to this question," Trump wrote on Twitter.

Option

The census will continue to be printed without the citizenship question while the administration re-evaluates all options to see if it could win a new lower court decision that would permit it to add the question, according to a person familiar with the administration's thinking.

Trump's hardline policies on immigration have been a key element of his presidency and 2020 re-election campaign. Trump last Thursday also said he was exploring whether the census, which the US Constitution requires be carried out every 10 years, can be delayed.

"We at the Department of Justice have been instructed to examine whether there is a path forward consistent with the Supreme Court decision that would allow us to include the citizenship question on the census," Assistant Attorney General Joseph Hunt told Maryland-based US District Judge George Hazel on Wednesday, according to a court transcript obtained by Reuters.

Hunt did not make clear who issued the instruction.

The Justice Department on Tuesday had told Hazel that the administration had made a final decision not to proceed with the citizenship question, according to two lawyers involved in the litigation. The judge then held a call with lawyers in the case after Trump's Wednesday announcement.

"We think there may be a legally available path under the Supreme Court's decision. We're examining that, looking at near-term options to see whether that's viable and possible," Hunt said.

Claim

Hazel said he wants a final response by Friday afternoon on whether the government will press ahead with adding the citizenship question. Otherwise, legal claims accusing administration officials of being motivated by racial bias in adding the citizenship question will move forward.

Hazel refused to allow the government more time to respond.

"If you were Facebook and an attorney for Facebook told me one thing, and then I read a press release from (Facebook Chief Executive) Mark Zuckerberg telling me something else, I would be demanding that Mark Zuckerberg appear in court with you the next time because I would be saying I don't think you speak for your client anymore," Hazel said.

Hazel indicated regret that he "hadn't gone far enough in terms of pinning the government down on where things stand," during the previous call on Tuesday.

Manhattan-based US District Judge Jesse Furman, presiding over a similar case, also pressed administration lawyers for an explanation.



Ross



Two Bradley Fighting Vehicles flank the stage being prepared in front of the Lincoln Memorial on July 3 in Washington, ahead of planned Fourth of July festivities with US President Donald Trump. (AP)

Britain

Funding lead up: Boris Johnson has increased his funding lead over Jeremy Hunt as they race to become the next British prime minister, official figures showed on Wednesday, and has so far raised the fourth-largest amount by any politician in Britain in recent years.

With Johnson and foreign minister Hunt stepping up their campaigns to replace Theresa May, both are seeking to raise money to pay for the cost of hiring venues, transport, staffing costs, leaflets and advertising.

Johnson has registered 235,000 pounds (\$295,583) in the last two weeks, taking the total amount he has received in the last year to 502,000 pounds, according to new figures released by parliament.

The most recent donations include 50,000 pounds from Peter Cruddas, one of the City of London's most prominent Brexiters, and 50,000 pounds from James Reuben, a financier.

By comparison, Hunt has registered no additional donations in the last two weeks. (AP)

'Strengthen union': UK Prime Minister Theresa May will urge her successor on Thursday to strengthen the bonds between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in a veiled criticism of those in her party who are widely thought to prefer Brexit to the union.

Both of the candidates to replace May, former London mayor Boris Johnson and foreign minister Jeremy Hunt, say they want to strengthen the union of the United Kingdom's four nations.

But they also say they are willing to take Britain out of the European Union without a deal if no agreement can be reached with the bloc, which other ministers say could make Scottish independence more likely.

In a speech in Scotland in the dying days of her premiership, May will mark 20 years of devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland by saying she believed her successor would build on the work done to strengthen the union's ties.

"The job of prime minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland brings with it privileges and responsibilities which you only really feel once the black door closes behind you," she will say, referring to the door of her Downing Street official residence.

"One of the first and greatest is the duty you owe to strengthen the Union - to govern on behalf of the whole United Kingdom," she will say, according to excerpts of her speech released by her office.

May's successor will take up his role later this month and the first task will be to try to break the impasse in parliament over Brexit and end the uncertainty over whether, when and how Britain will leave the EU.

Johnson and Hunt have said they want to secure an agreement with the EU to deliver a smooth Brexit to minimise the disruption to businesses.

But if no agreement can be reached, both have said they would trigger a no-deal Brexit - something

that some ministers say could fuel demands for a second independence referendum in Scotland, which voted to stay in the EU in the 2016 vote.

An opinion poll published in June showed a majority of Conservative Party members - who will make the final decision on Britain's next prime minister - would accept losing Scotland from the United Kingdom as long as Brexit is delivered.

Calls for a new independence referendum in Scotland have grown since the Brexit vote. Scotland rejected independence by a 55-45% majority in a 2014 referendum. (RTRS)



May

Trump presides over July 4th holiday with military show

WASHINGTON, July 4, (RTRS): US President Donald Trump will preside over July Fourth Independence Day celebrations on Thursday with a speech about patriotism and a show of military might that critics say is politicizing an important holiday and wasting taxpayer money.

Trump, a Republican who admired flashy displays of national

pride and military strength put on by France, has dismissed concerns about the expense and militaristic overtones of the Washington event, which will take place in front of the Lincoln Memorial and feature fireworks, a flyover by Air Force One and a display of tanks.

Democrats charge the president with staging a campaign rally.

Though the White House has said his remarks would not be political in nature, the president has a history of veering off script with sharp partisan attacks even at events that are not meant to be overtly political.

"We're going to have a great Fourth of July in Washington, DC. It'll be like no other," Trump told reporters earlier this week in the

Oval Office. Asked if he could give a speech that would represent all Americans, he said he thought he could and then launched into an attack on Democrats' policies on healthcare and taxes. Flights will be suspended at nearby Reagan National Airport from 6:15 pm to 7:45 pm ET and then again later in the evening for the festivities.

Summer Getaway

25% discount on Rooms during Weekdays (Saturday to Wednesday)

15% discount on Rooms during Weekends (Thursday & Friday)

Offer valid from 15th June until 31st July 2019

Members & Inhouse guests enjoy 25% discount at Andalucia Café & Boatyard Lounge

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