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PG&E

October 7, 2009

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, I am writing to ask you to oppose Vitter Amendment #2644 to the Commerce Justice and Science FY10 Appropriations. The NALEO Educational Fund is one of the nation's leading organizations in the area of Census policy development and public education, and we are deeply committed to ensuring that the Census Bureau provides our nation with the most accurate count of its population.

We urge you to oppose the Vitter-Bennett Amendment. The amendment fundamentally undermines the goal of the U.S. Constitution which is to ensure that we have an accurate portrait of America in every decennial Census. The Vitter amendment is about intimidating individuals from participating in the Census.

The 14th Amendment to the Constitution clearly states that the apportionment of members of the House of Representatives is based on a full count of residents in each state. This amendment was enacted in part to repeal the provisions in Article I in the Constitution which counted slaves as only three-fifths of a person for apportionment purposes – the Vitter amendment evokes this shameful legacy.

Asking about immigration status in the 2010 Census is unnecessarily intrusive and will raise concerns among all respondents – both native-born and immigrant – about the confidentiality and privacy of information provided to the government. This will deter many residents from responding, and result in an inaccurate Census count. Accurate Census data are critical for both the government and the business community, which use the data to make sound decisions about policies affecting every aspect of our nation's well-being, including education, housing, transportation, health and public safety. An inaccurate count will jeopardize America's future prosperity.

If enacted, the Vitter amendment would also stop the 2010 Census in its tracks and prevent Census the forms from being mailed next spring. This would severely impair the Congressional reapportionment after 2010 and redistricting of congressional and state legislative districts. Ultimately, the Vitter amendment would waste \$7 billion in research, planning, and preparation that has occurred for Census 2010.

Please oppose the Vitter amendment. Should you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Gloria Montañó Greene, Director of the Washington Office at 202-546-2536 or [gmontanogreene@naleo.org](mailto:gmontanogreene@naleo.org).

Sincerely,

Arturo Vargas  
Executive Director

[www.naleo.org](http://www.naleo.org)

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