

U.S. Dept. of Commerce: Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross responds to contempt vote by House Democrats

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News Media Contact:
Office of Public Affairs, 202-482-4883

Department of Commerce Remained Cooperative with Oversight Requests for Months

WASHINGTON – Today, House Democrats took the unnecessary step to hold the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, and Attorney General William P. Barr in contempt after the Department spent months cooperating with the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, as well as its voluminous and burdensome requests for information and testimony.

“House Democrats never sought to have a productive relationship with the Trump Administration, and today’s PR stunt further demonstrates their unending quest to generate headlines instead of operating in good faith with our Department,” said Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. “It is an unfortunate fact that there are some who would like nothing more than to see this Administration fail whatever the cost to the country may be. Preferring to play political games rather than help lead the country, they have made every attempt to ascribe evil motivations to everyday functions of government.”

The Secretary and Department have both spent months working in good faith with the Committee. After their first document request in January of 2019 on the Secretary’s decision to reinstate the citizenship question to the 2020 Census, the Department made over 2,000 documents available to the Committee, comprising over 14,000 pages of documents in nine separate productions over the course of a five-month period.

At the same time, the Department allowed current and former officials sit with representatives of the Committee for transcribed interviews, while the Secretary himself testified voluntarily in front of the full Committee for seven hours. Together, they answered well over a thousand questions. Additionally, in May of 2018, a senior advisory to Secretary Ross and the current Deputy Director of the Census Bureau testified in front of the Committee on the same matter.