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U.S. Supreme Court Issues Decision to End Census Operations

(Sacaton, Arizona) Today, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision to stay the federal district injunction in Wilbur Ross v. National Urban League, essentially allowing the Department of Commerce to end census counting operations at any time. The decision was issued late today and there is no word yet as to when the Commerce Department will act to stop counting.

The Supreme Court's decision was issued without explanation or an indication of the vote to grant, but there must have been at least five Justices in favor of the decision. Justice Sonia Sotomayor issued a very strong dissent that indicated her clear understanding of the issues at play in this case.

The Gila River Indian Community intervened in this case because at the time of the Department of Commerce decision to end counting, the Community was less than 50% counted. Based on Census data from yesterday, the Community remains undercounted. It is not yet clear when the Census Bureau will cease counting operations on the Community's Reservation, but if they do not continue counting for at least several more days, it is almost impossible that the count on the Community's Reservation will meet the target of 99% counted that is the benchmark for a successful Census count.

"Today's decision by the U.S. Supreme Court is a bitter pill for us to swallow here on the Reservation," said Governor Stephen Roe Lewis. He continued, "With no explanation or rationale, a majority simply decided that our people do not deserve to be counted, thus continuing a long history of leaving Indian peoples at the margins of the U.S. society at large and economy. Our options may be few at this point, but we will not give up our fight to count and be counted."

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The Gila River Indian Community is located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona and is home to the indigenous O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) people. The Tribe is comprised of seven districts. The administrative offices and departments are located in Sacaton and serve the people throughout these seven districts.
