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May 13, 2020

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144 Organizations to Congress: 2020 Census COVID-19 Plans Can't Keep Communities Undercounted for Yet Another Decade

The Methods Used to Count Undercounted Communities are at Risk and the Census Bureau Needs a Plan

WASHINGTON – The [Census Counts campaign](#), housed at The Leadership Conference Education Fund, led 143 other organizations in urging Congress to take action to prevent an inaccurate 2020 Census in the wake of COVID-19 by supporting [significant enhancements](#) to the methods that have been specifically designed to count historically undercounted communities. The U.S. Census Bureau needs a clear and detailed plan that includes increases in outreach so that it can execute these census operations in a way that is safe, fair, and doesn't leave communities behind.

“The people and communities getting hit the hardest by job loss and illness right now are the same ones the census has missed for decades. As the Census Bureau moves to keep people safe by extending the 2020 Census timeline, we have to ensure historically undercounted communities aren't, once again, being denied a chance to receive the funding, resources, and political power they deserve,” said Beth Lynk, Census Counts campaign director, The Leadership Conference Education Fund. **“The Census Bureau needs to step up its plan to increase outreach to communities that have been historically undercounted even before we were facing a national public health crisis. Getting counted in the 2020 Census is a way to strengthen our communities and everyone deserves that chance.”**

Without significant enhancements to support the following operations, rural, low income and remote communities, people of color, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, and other populations more likely to be missed could be denied their fair share of representation and resources:

- Door-to-door counting of households who have not yet responded to the census — the most complex, labor-intensive census operation;
- Hand-delivering census packets in rural and remote communities, on American Indian reservations, in areas recovering from natural disasters, in much of Alaska, and in Puerto Rico;
- Counting people experiencing homelessness; and
- Facilitating outreach to households with limited internet access.

In [a letter](#) sent to the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform, the groups recommended the following enhancements to the 2020 Census plan and operations:

- Send at least two additional census mailings during the extended self-response period from May through early August;

- Update the 2020 Census Integrated Communications Campaign, including extending the advertising program during Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU), adding new languages, adjustments in COVID-19 messaging, and non-response targeting, among other improvements;
- Expand staffing of the Census Questionnaire Assistance operation for all languages;
- Update guidance for stakeholders supporting the 2020 Census with regard to phone and SMS-related issues;
- Reimagine the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance operation in response to COVID-19 with an expanded framework that includes both "mobile" assistance and fixed locations, as well as a larger staff;
- Schedule operations for counting people experiencing homelessness;
- Provide key data to stakeholders to support effective outreach strategies and continue their “get-out-the-count” efforts; and
- Ensure a robust and accurate post-enumeration survey operation.

The letter is available [here](#) and is signed by the following organizations:

The Leadership Conference Education Fund
 Census Counts Campaign
 Advancement Project California
 Advocates for Children of New Jersey
 Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
 American Arab Anti Discrimination Committee
 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
 American Federation of Teachers
 American Library Association
 American Muslim Voice Foundation
 Americans for Indian Opportunity
 APANO
 APAPA Texas
 Arab American Institute (AAI)
 Arkansas United
 Asian American Federation
 Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago
 Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
 Asian Law Alliance
 Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
 Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
 ATNJ Education Fund
 Austin Asian Complete Count Committee
 Big Sky Chamber of Commerce

Bill Wilson Center
Black Belt Community Foundation
Boat People SOS Inc
California Association of Nonprofits
California Community Foundation
California Native Vote Project
California State Senate
Center for Civic Policy
Center for Employment Training
Center for Law & Social Policy (CLASP)
Central American Resource Center
Children's Defense Fund-Ohio
City of San Jose
Color Of Change Education Fund
Colorado Latino Leadership Advocacy and Research Organization
Common Cause Education Fund
Common Cause New Mexico
Community Health Partnership of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties
ConXion to Community
Cupertino Chamber of Commerce
EARLY MO
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Empowerment Congress of Doña Ana County
Equality California
Fair Count Inc.
Fair Immigration Reform Movement/Community Change
Faith in Public Life
Foothill-De Anza Community College District
Forefront
Forward Together
Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO)
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
Human Rights Campaign
Immigrant Resettlement & Cultural Center
Impact Fund
Innovation Ohio Education Fund
International Children Assistance Network (ICAN)
International Rescue Committee
Japanese American Citizens League - San Jose Chapter
Kentucky Nonprofit Network
Kentucky Youth Advocates
LA Voice
Latino Community Foundation
Latino Network
Latino Policy Forum

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
League of Women Voters Education Fund
League of Women Voters of Connecticut
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Voter Table
Mi Familia Vota Education Fund
Michigan Nonprofit Association
Montana Nonprofit Association
MontPIRG Leadership Fund
Morgan Hill Unified School District
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
NALEO Educational Fund
National Action Network
National Association of Jewish Legislators
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for Literacy
National Coalition of 100 Black Women - Central Alabama
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Community Action Partnership
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association
National LGBTQ Task Force
NAVA Education Project
NC Child
Nebraska Civic Engagement Table
New York Immigration Coalition
NextDayBetter
Nonprofit VOTE
Northwest Health Foundation
Ohio Census Advocacy Coalition
Oklahoma Policy Institute
Padres & Jovenes Unidos
Pars Equality Center
Partnership for America's Children
PICO California
Poder Latinx
PolicyLink
ProgressNow NM Education Fund
Proyecto Juan Diego
Raíces
ReadyNation
San Jose/Silicon Valley NAACP
Santa Clara County Office of Education
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)

Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center
Silver State Equality-Nevada
South Asian Network
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
State Voices
The Arc of the United States
The Florida Civic Engagement Table (FLCET)
The Health Trust
The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Together We Count
UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism
United Presbyterians of Wilcox County, Inc.
United Way Bay Area
United Way of the Columbia Willamette
United We Dream
Vietnamese American Roundtable
Virginia Civic Engagement Table
Voices for Progress
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE

The Leadership Conference Education Fund builds public will for federal policies that promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States. For more information on The Education Fund, visit <http://leadershipconferenceedfund.org/>.