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Census Experts Call on Senate to Support Robust Funding

WASHINGTON – Nearing the final and most critical step in funding the 2020 Census, a diverse coalition of more than 150 business, civic, non-profit and local governments [wrote](#) to the bipartisan leadership of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee requesting full funding for the imminent national head count. Organized by [the Census Project](#), a broad-based network of business, civic, and academic groups who closely monitor 2020 Census preparations, the letter said, “[we] urge you to support a robust funding level for the constitutionally required 2020 Census. The Census Bureau has one chance to get the count right in all communities — there are no do-overs!”

The letter was cosigned by groups as diverse as the National League of Cities, the National Association of Realtors, the National Congress of American Indians, the International Conference of Shopping Centers, and dozens of wide-ranging local groups.

The groups wrote; “[a]s you know, the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed H.R. 3055, which allocated \$8.45 billion for the Census Bureau, which includes \$7.5 billion in dedicated funding for the 2020 Census. This funding recommendation reflects what stakeholders believe the Census Bureau needs to conduct a successful 2020 Census, enabling the agency to meet unique challenges facing the nation’s first “high-tech census.”

As the Census Bureau is making final preparations and begins rolling out massive operations this fall to get the count started, the national coalition of census experts and data consumers stressed the challenges ahead for a fair, complete and accurate count.

“...In less than a year, the decennial census will be in full swing. By all accounts, the 2020 Census will be the largest, most difficult enumeration in our nation’s history. The U.S. population is increasingly diverse — geographically, culturally, and linguistically — with households becoming more complex, and a greater share of residents falling into “harder to reach” categories...To meet these operational challenges, we urge the Committee also to provide the Census Bureau with \$8.45 billion in FY 2020. This funding level would enable the Bureau to invest in strengthening key activities — such as information technology, cybersecurity, and outreach to hard-to-count populations — necessary to conduct a successful 2020 Census,” their letter stated.

Census Project co-director Howard Fienberg said, “The 2020 Census planning this decade has dealt with more than its fair share of uncertainty, and the Senate should swiftly ensure the imminent roll out of the largest peace time mobilization in history will be conducted fully, fairly, and accurately.”

“The Senate can add to the strong vote of confidence in 2020 planning that came from the House, and approve the full \$8.45 billion,” added Census Project co-director Mary Jo Hoeksema. “Insufficient,

delayed, or uncertain full-year funding for the 2020 Census jeopardizes the agency’s ability to meet its constitutional mandate.”

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The Census Project (<https://thecensusproject.org>) is a broad-based coalition of national, state, and local organizations that support an inclusive and accurate 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) (the modern version of the census “long form”). Its member organizations, representing the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors, rely on objective data that the Census Bureau produces to inform evidence-based investment, policy and planning decisions.