

COMMITTEE TO PROTECT



A National Civic Campaign
to Promote the 2020 Census

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**Americans Showing Higher Willingness to Be Counted in 2020 Census,
But Distrust of Federal Government Creating Strong Headwinds**

Washington, D.C. – A [new national survey](#) of public attitudes about the 2020 U.S. Census shows Americans are growing more willing to stand up and be counted, confirming a positive trend from other surveys, although serious concerns about how the data will be used – and if it will be secure – confront the Census Bureau’s outreach campaign on the eve of major operations.

The online survey found that 58% of respondents said they “definitely will participate” in the 2020 Census. That means more than 4 in 10 are still not sure, which is comparable to this point in advance of recent decennial counts in 2000 and 2010.

The survey found deep levels of general mistrust of government driving the lack of participation among many that is undermining census participation. For example, 49% agreed with the statement “...The government will do whatever it wants regardless of the data.” This sentiment was over 50% among Hispanics, African Americans, Muslims and the youngest age group.

The findings show the toughest motivational challenge for the Census Bureau is with the youngest Americans. Among those age 18-24, only 29% said they will participate, and for those 25-35, it was 52%, well below the national average. Despite the cynicism, the 2020 Census had one of the highest reputation scores, with 78% of respondents expressing a favorable view, compared to only 50% favorable for the Federal Government.

The Census Bureau itself scored the highest of all groups measured as a “credible messenger” on the census, with a “very credible” score of 51%. The next highest rated messengers were non-profits working with the census (38% very credible), local first responders (38%) and local community organizations (35%). Among those rated the least credible were national entertainment and sports figures.

The study tested about a dozen messages intended to help motivate participation. Overall, emotional messaging that speaks to empowerment and creating a true picture of the country is very appealing – nearly half of those surveyed saying each of those messages makes them much more likely to participate.

Article 1's survey showed a higher percentage of respondents were willing to participate in the 2020 Census than the Census Bureau's own research in 2019 and virtually the same finding as Pew Research reported from September of this year. (CB 68% A1 83% Pew 84%)

The survey was conducted by Quadrant Research for Article 1, a non-profit coalition of Census experts who conducted the audience research to help craft a national unifying civic message to promote a full, complete and accurate count in 2020. During October, they conducted an online survey with 1,499 members of the general population, with an oversample of 300 English-Speaking Latinos, 300 Spanish-Speaking Latinos, 400 Muslim Americans, and 200 Asian Americans.

"While the results of this survey are indeed heartening, we know we still have a long way to go to ensure full Latino participation in the 2020 Census," said Arturo Vargas, of Article 1, and Chief Executive Officer of NALEO Educational Fund.

"For the first time in our history, Latinos represent the second-largest population demographic in the country. Ensuring that every man, woman, and child is counted fairly and accurately is crucial to the future prosperity of our diverse community. Research like this, in addition to research being conducted internally by NALEO Educational Fund will help us address our challenges," Vargas added.

Former Census Director Vince Barabba, also of Article 1, added that, "...although the actions by some have raised citizens' concern over the privacy of their information, this study shows the history and track record of the Census Bureau in protecting and securing personal information has led to a strong willingness to participate in the 2020 Census."

Dr. Ken Prewitt of Article 1, and the Census Director for the 2000 decennial put the findings in a historical context. "Every census since 1790, headwinds particular to the times notwithstanding, has refreshed a unique truth-telling tool of our democracy, designed to equip the people to take stock of how well their needs are being tended to by those it has trusted with the powers of government. And, so it will be in 2020."

Methodology

Article 1 conducted 9 focus groups during August and September 2019 in Detroit, Michigan, San Antonio, Texas, and Los Angeles, California among individuals who said they were unlikely to answer the census to gain insights into perceptions about the Census among communities traditionally hard-to-count. Between October 3 and October 24, we conducted an online survey with 1,499 members of the general population, with oversample of 300 English-Speaking Latinos, 300 Spanish-Speaking Latinos, 400 Muslim Americans, and 200 Asian Americans. The margin of error for the general population is +/-2.5%, and the margin of error is higher for the different subgroups

Comparable Surveys

[Pew Research Center](#)

- Conducted: September 16-29, 2019
- Audience: N = 6,878

[Census Barriers, Attitudes and Motivators Survey U.S. Census Bureau](#)

- Conducted: February - April 2018
- Audience: N = 17,500 respondents, oversampled Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and other small-sample races

About Article 1

As the Founders foresaw when they wrote Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3 in the Constitution, the Census, and the trusted independent federal statistical system of which it is a part, are not only vital measures of the progress of the nation, but the foundation of data on the economy and the characteristics of every community in the nation. Article 1 was organized in 2018 as non-profit to share independent, non-partisan research and findings with key stakeholders and partner organizations to strengthen national messaging efforts; to ensure every person in the country is counted.

Article 1's Census Experts

Ken Prewitt, (Board Member) Census Director for President Clinton (1998 to 2001), and currently Carnegie Professor of Public Affairs, and Special Advisor to the President of Columbia University. He has served as Director of the National Opinion Research Center, President of the Social Science Research Council, and Senior Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, the Russell-Sage Foundation, and serves as President of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

Vincent Barabba, (Board Member) Census Director for Presidents Nixon, Ford & Carter (1973-76 and 1979-81) and Chairman & co-founder of Market Insight Corporation. Vince also served as a Commissioner of the California Citizen Redistricting Commission a 14-member non-partisan, citizen's commission charged with redrawing California's Senate, Assembly, State Board of Equalization, and Congressional districts based on information gathered during the 2010 census.

Arturo Vargas, (Board Member) is the Chief Executive Officer of the NALEO Educational Fund, a national nonprofit organization that strengthens American democracy by promoting the full participation of Latinos in civic life. Arturo has held these positions since 1994. He has been an appointee to the National Advisory Committee to the U.S. Census Bureau for the 2000, 2010, and now the 2020 decennial census. Arturo holds a master's degree in Education and a bachelor's degree in History and Spanish from Stanford University.

Jessica Heinz, (Board Member) is a former Assistant Los Angeles County Attorney (1979 to 2009) and graduate of UCLA Law School. Through her legal career she has represented the City in multiple lawsuits over several decades to ensure a full, fair and accurate count of Los Angeles residents in the national census and is regarded as an expert on Supreme Court cases concerning the Article 1 mandate for a once a decade count of the nation.

Benjamin Chevat, (President) former Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (NY), who chairs the Census Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives. Ben drafted and worked on Rep. Maloney's legislation that was signed into law to make the director of the Census Bureau a term appointment to free the agency from political interference and spent almost 17 years working on congressional oversight of the 2000 and 2010 census operations. He currently serves as Executive Director of the non-profit, 9/11 Health Watch, which works to ensure effective operation of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund and the World Trade Center Health as intended by law.

Steve Jost, (Advisor) former chief communications officer at the U.S. Census Bureau and oversaw the multimillion-dollar national outreach, advertising and promotion efforts for both the 2000, and 2010 decennial census. He's currently Senior Vice President at Subject Matter, a Washington, D.C. full-service communications firm that advises non-profit, corporate and government clients on public policy communications efforts where Steve leads the firm's government practice.