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**Census Stakeholders Call on Senate to Match House Plan to Give
Census \$400 Million in Next COVID-19 Relief Bill**

148 National, State and Local Organizations Join Letter to Appropriators

Washington, D.C. – Census experts representing local, state and national organizations sent a letter to U.S. Senate appropriators to stress the need for \$400 million to replenish the Census Bureau’s depleted 2020 contingency funds to deal with disruptions to census field operations, including the resurgence of COVID-19.

A total of 148 census stakeholder groups representing a diverse range of public and private organizations [wrote](#) to the leaders of the Senate Appropriations committees: “... *we urge the Senate to allocate at least \$400 million to help ensure a successful 2020 Census amidst significant challenges, which the U.S. House of Representatives included in its latest COVID relief bill (H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act, or HEROES Act).*”

Among the signers of the letter are an array of interests including the National Association of Towns and Townships, National League of Cities, American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of REALTORS® and NAACP. They and others wrote:

“...The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenge of conducting an inclusive, accurate, and efficient 2020 Census, forcing the Bureau to, among other things, adopt new procedures to protect field staff, temporarily suspend field operations and close local offices, and push the Nonresponse Follow-Up phase into the summer and fall.”

The letter stressed that while COVID-19 has been a substantial disrupter to Census operations, it is not the only threat to a full, fair and accurate count. The Bureau faces many more historic threats. Unless the Bureau is able to adequately address other emergencies that may jeopardize the 2020 Census, including natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes and wildfires), IT failures, and a potential resurgence of COVID-19 that could discourage public cooperation during the door-to-door phase, or impact the Census workforce.

Census Project co-director Howard Fienberg said, “The virus has been the big disruptor to Census operations, but history demonstrates other risks of disruption to any census. Prudence and history dictate being prepared with contingency funds for any further emergencies.”

According to Census Project co-director Mary Jo Hoeksema, “The 2020 count is too consequential for the next decade to not give the Bureau the reserves they need to keep operating in emergencies.”

The Census Project (<https://thecensusproject.org>) is a broad-based coalition of national, state, and local organizations and companies that support an inclusive and accurate 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) (the modern version of the census “long form”). Its 800+ member organizations and companies, 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.