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Nearly 900 National and Community Organizations Call on Senate to Extend Census Deadline

Huge, Diverse Coalition Say It Is “Imperative” Congress Block Plans to “Rush” Census Count

Washington, D.C. – Senate Leaders Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer received a direct appeal today from an impressive array of national, state and local organizations who support a complete count of the nation in the 2020 Census to add a provision to the next COVID relief bill that would extend statutory deadlines and give the Census Bureau four more months to get a quality count of everyone in the country.

In a [letter](#) signed by nearly 900 organizations, census stakeholders said the COVID-19 pandemic had seriously hampered census operations and “...*Currently, there are low response areas in every part of the country, in every state, in every city. If remaining counting operations are not done well, communities most in need of resources to improve quality of life and standards of living will get the short end of the stick for the next decade.*”

The appeal came just days after the Census Bureau announced an Administration reversal from its April position in support of an extension, and a surprising speed-up of census operations that will end data collection a full month early, at the end of September. The letter was organized by the Census Project, the largest and most diverse census advocacy group in the nation, and signers included an incredible array of advocates, from leading business groups such as the Insights Association and Nielsen, senior and youth organizations like AARP and the YWCA, expert data professionals including the Population Association of American and the Association of Public Data Users, and influential non-profits such as the Children’s Defense Fund, League of Women Voters, and Independent Sector, to faith groups including the Union of Reform Judaism and the Tabernacle Baptist Church, as well as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National Association of Towns and Townships.

It stressed to the Senate an extension was “*imperative*” and “...*Congress has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that the enumeration is conducted responsibly and delivers reliable data about our nation’s changing socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Too much is at stake--the undercount of vulnerable populations such as young children, people in low-income*

communities (rural and urban), immigrants, American Indians and others; congressional representation; and the annual allocation of \$1.5 trillion in federal funding to states and localities.”

Census Project co-director Howard Fienberg said, “The Senate should approve an extension in their COVID relief bill or risk severe undercounts in both urban cores and remote rural areas.”

According to Census Project co-director Mary Jo Hoeksema, “I think every Senator should take note of this incredible and unified call to give the Census professionals the time needed to get a quality count. Never before have we seen so many diverse organizations sign an appeal to Congress in so short a time.

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.