

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 5, 2022

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Robert Santos
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo and Director Santos:

We are writing to share our concerns regarding the disturbing results of the 2020 Census Post-Enumeration Survey (PES), which revealed a massive net national undercount of our nation's Latino population, Black population, and American Indian and Alaska Native population living on reservations (AI/AN) in the 2020 Census. According to the PES, the net undercount for Latinos was 4.99 percent, more than a threefold increase from Census 2010. The undercount was 5.64 and 3.30 percent among AI/ANs and Black Americans, respectively. While the PES did not show an undercount of Asian Americans, we are concerned about the lack of disaggregated data for this population. Given the historic undercount of these communities, we urge you to take immediate steps to develop plans to mitigate the impacts of the 2020 Census count and provide regular briefings to our offices on the Bureau's progress on this front.

We recognize that the Census Bureau faced unprecedented challenges in conducting the 2020 Census, including insufficient funding for several initially-planned activities to prepare for and carry out the enumeration; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all of 2020 Census operations; and several natural disasters that occurred during those operations. In addition, we understand the detrimental effects that the previous Administration's attempt to politicize the census likely had on the enumeration, including efforts to add an untested and unfair question about citizenship, and the unwarranted pressure to rush operations and the schedule for releasing apportionment and redistricting data. We commend the work of career Census Bureau staff to address these challenges and safeguard the quality and integrity of census data, as well as the tireless efforts of all staff who had to nimbly adapt the Bureau's operations in an unpredictable and ever-changing public health environment.

However, the net undercount revealed by the PES is alarming, and the severely detrimental consequences could extend throughout this entire decade. With Latinos being the country's second-largest population group, the Census 2020 undercount could severely impair the future well-being and prosperity of the Latino community especially, and our nation as a whole. Unless corrective action is taken, the net undercount has the potential to significantly distort the allocation of more than \$1.5 trillion in federal funding annually to states and localities. This misallocation would have a devastating impact on thousands of underserved communities across our nation, preventing resources from going to the programs and areas which need them the most.

In addition, the net undercount of Latino, Black, and AI/AN communities could dramatically erode the ability of government agencies to monitor and enforce civil rights protections and skew the data that are used for countless decisions in the public and private sector. As a result, our nation could see existing ethnic and socio-economic inequities in areas such as employment, education, housing, and health care grow far worse.

With so much at stake, we respectfully request the Bureau develop plans for and brief our offices on the following:

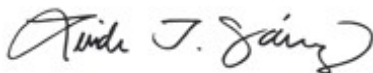
- **Plans for assessing the impact of the undercount on the full range of activities for which Census data are used, including federal funding formulas, civil rights enforcement, and other public and private sector use of Census data.** In this context, we note that the Bureau has suggested that Census 2020 data may not be “acceptable” for certain uses. We request that the Bureau clarify which uses, if any, for which Census 2020 data are not acceptable.
- **Efforts to examine and implement approaches to mitigate the impact of the undercount of Latino, Black, and AI/AN populations on the programs and activities for which Census data are used.** This should include information about the Bureau’s plans regarding the development of Population Estimates, and other data that affect federal funding formulas. We also understand that the Bureau has started discussions with federal agencies about federal funding formulas. Please provide us with information about the status of and future plans for these discussions, as well as how the amelioration of the undercount will be incorporated into the discussions.
- **Plans to release state- and county-level information on undercounts of Latino, Black, Asian, and AI/AN populations, as well as national origin data for Asian Americans at all levels.** This type of disaggregated data is essential to gaining a complete picture of the accuracy of the 2020 Census. We encourage the Bureau to brief Congress on the feasibility of releasing statistically sound undercount estimates for the greatest possible number of subgroups and sub-national geographic units.
- **Any outreach to states and localities about the availability of existing and planned programs which permit states and localities to request a review that may result in the correction of Census 2020 counts.** We urge the Bureau to provide technical assistance and other guidance for states, localities, Tribes, and the stakeholders that work with them to enhance participation in the review and challenge programs. We also request information about any Bureau plans to assess the criteria which, if met, would result in a revised Population Estimate, to assess the feasibility of expanding these criteria, and to provide greater flexibility in the submission of challenge and review requests for all the foregoing programs.
- **Details of any further research, evaluation, and assessments to understand the specific factors which contributed to the undercount.** This should include any new assessments the Bureau will undertake given the magnitude of the Latino undercount. We also wish to

learn about any plans the Bureau has to use the findings of the foregoing research and evaluation to develop recommendations for changes in its operational plans for the American Community Survey, Census 2030 and other census data collection programs and surveys.

- **Information about any Bureau plans to evaluate approaches to modernizing the census, and how it will ensure that it assesses the impact of such plans on achieving a fair and accurate count of historically undercounted communities.** We believe the results of the PES, together with evolving social, public health, technological and statistical analysis trends indicate that the Bureau should consider making fundamental changes to its traditional methods of enumerating the nation's population. This is particularly important for the Asian population, a growing community in the U.S. We encourage the Bureau to work with community partners to ensure future counts accurately portray our country's diverse communities.

Ultimately, we believe the Bureau shares our vision of a decennial Census which obtains a fair and accurate count of all our country's residents. The undercount of the Latino, Black, and AI/AN population, as well as lack of disaggregated data for the Asian population, reveals that Census 2020 fell far short of this goal. We look forward to hearing from you regarding the requests set forth in this letter and stand ready to work with you to find solutions to the many challenges created by the 2020 undercount.

Sincerely,



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



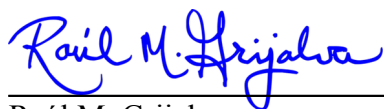
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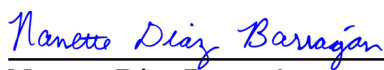
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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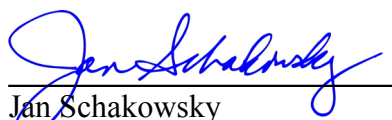
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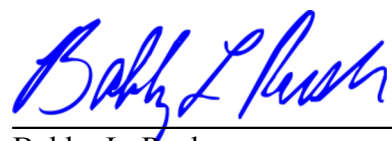
Jim Costa
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Chair, Subcommittee on
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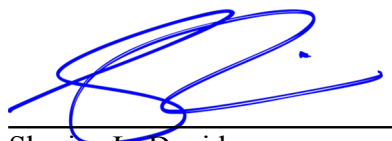
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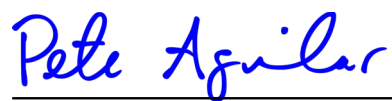
Jan Schakowsky
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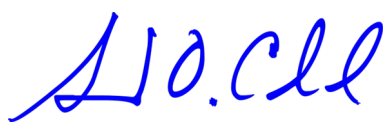
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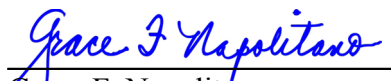
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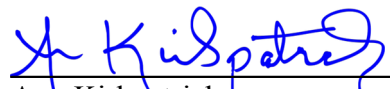



Darren Soto
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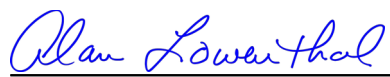



Marie Newman
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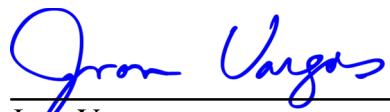

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Tony Cárdenas
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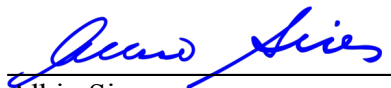

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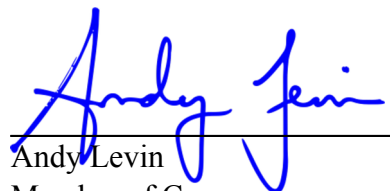

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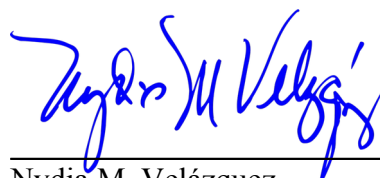
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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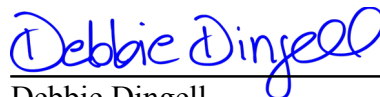
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