

*Congress of the United States*  
*Washington, D. C. 20515*

March 13, 2020

Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dr. Steven Dillingham  
Director  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Road  
Washington, D.C. 20233

Dear Secretary Ross and Director Dillingham:

We write to express our concerns regarding the impact of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) on participation and operations for the 2020 Census, particularly as it presents an increased risk of an undercount. We understand that the Census Bureau is actively monitoring the situation in order to adapt operations to ensure a complete and accurate count. As you develop contingency plans, we urge you to consider how historically marginalized communities, people experiencing homelessness, and communities with low broadband access will be reached.

As Members of Congress, we have been working with local, state, and non-government stakeholders to ensure my constituents have adequate opportunities to respond to the 2020 Census. We have secured Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Centers (MQACs) in communities, organized Census job fairs, and coordinated outreach events. By working with trusted community partners, constituents have access to language and technical assistance when completing the Census. Unfortunately, many of these activities involve members of the community coming together.

Due to recent developments around COVID-19, there is increased concern and uncertainty about attending any community events. As a result, large and small events across the country have been canceled. It may seem simple to encourage everyone to respond online. However, this method is not an option for thousands of people.

While we appreciate your work to build a robust online infrastructure, simply pointing people to the online form is insufficient. We urge you to consider alternative options including but not limited to: extending the enumeration period for non-response follow up and for people experiencing homelessness. We believe these steps are necessary to protect public health while ensuring a complete and accurate count.

In order to provide adequate resources to constituents, please provide written responses to the following questions by March 27, 2020:

1. What steps is the Bureau taking to develop contingency plans for the 2020 Census during the current pandemic?
  - a. How will contingency plans address the needs of people with little to no access to broadband?
  - b. How will people living in non-traditional housing be reached?
  - c. How will people experiencing homelessness be reached?
  - d. How will individuals who have been quarantined as a result of COVID-19 be reached?
  - e. How will individuals residing in skilled nursing facilities and nursing facilities be reached? Individuals residing in Department of Veterans Affairs Community Living Centers (VA Nursing Homes)?
2. How will the Census Bureau ensure the health and safety of enumerators?
3. What guidance will you provide to operators of Mobile Questionnaire Centers?
4. What safety precautions is the Census Bureau taking to ensure the health and safety of those staffing and visiting MQCs? How quickly will community partners be expected to adapt to changes set in place by the Bureau as a result of the pandemic?
5. When will the Bureau issue guidance to local, state, and non-government partners that are hosting community events?

Thank you in advance for your responses to these critical questions. We appreciate your efforts to ensure a complete and accurate count.

Sincerely,



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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



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J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress



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Harley Rouda  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Mucarsel-Powell  
Member of Congress



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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



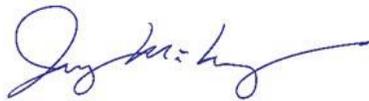
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Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress



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Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



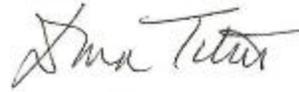
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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



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Silvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



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TJ Cox  
Member of Congress



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Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress



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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



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Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



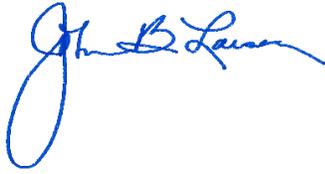
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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



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Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



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John Larson  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



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Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Susie Lee  
Member of Congress



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Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress



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Deb Haaland  
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Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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John Lewis  
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Ben Ray Luján  
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Judy Chu

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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard

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Lucille Roybal-Allard  
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Jan Schakowsky

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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez

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Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress