

March 26, 2020

Dr. Steven Dillingham, Ph.D  
Director  
United States Census Bureau  
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Dr. Dillingham:

Given the unprecedented events associated with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we urge you to extend the Census response deadline beyond its currently scheduled conclusion on August 14, 2020 to September 30, 2020 and authorize United States Census Regional Offices to exercise flexibility in the timeline for enumeration in their respective jurisdictions. As our cities continue to dedicate resources to respond to this outbreak and take strong precautionary measures to ensure social distancing, there will be diminished capacity to administer the Census. A Census count under these circumstances would not only fail to properly account for our current population, particularly our most vulnerable residents, but could also have dire consequences for our communities' public health.

Over the past two years, our cities have worked with thousands of community-based and faith-based organizations to develop a wide array of targeted outreach strategies to educate and motivate residents to respond to the 2020 Census. These outreach strategies heavily rely on direct, face-to-face communication and interaction with residents to encourage participation in the Census and overcome barriers to participation that cause many communities to be historically undercounted.

With the mandated cessation of all large gatherings and the imposition of social distancing practices, our cities and partners have had to cancel meetings, workshops, community and neighborhood events, as well as a variety of door-to-door canvassing operations. We know that none of these tried and true outreach methods are possible in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that any Census count that occurs without this outreach will cause an historic and extremely damaging undercount. If the Census Count is rightly delayed, we will be able to fully activate our network to connect with our community, in particular our historically undercounted communities.

Although many cities also hoped that the Census Bureau's increased emphasis on online submissions would facilitate an elevated self-response rate and help capture historically undercounted communities, we are deeply concerned that large swaths of our communities do not have access to the internet at home. According to the Pew Research Center, racial minorities, older adults, rural residents, and those with lower levels of education and income are less likely to have broadband service at home. Roughly three-in-ten adults with annual household incomes below \$30,000 (29%) don't own a smartphone. More than four-in-ten don't have home broadband services (44%) or a traditional computer (46%). These individuals would need access to one of the Census Bureau's outreach sites that provide the public with an opportunity to access the Internet.

If local businesses and libraries are closed, it is inconceivable to assume the Census will meet its online reporting targets necessary to achieve their targeted response rate. Technology access was one of the biggest barriers to ensuring a complete Census count. During the COVID-19 pandemic, that barrier has become the only safe outreach method available. We know that we must have more than digital outreach tools available to conduct a complete, safe, and accurate Census count.

As you know, the vital importance of an accurate Census count cannot be overstated. Not only is the Census central to apportioning political power, but the data also influences the allocation of billions of dollars every year for services that our residents rely on, including like schools, fire departments, and hospitals. As mayors of cities across America, we have an enormous stake in ensuring the accuracy of the Census count. We are not asking for a delay of the deadline getting the Census information to the President; but urge you to extend the Census deadline to September 30.

Sincerely,

Jenny A. Durkan  
Mayor  
Seattle, Washington

Sam Liccardo  
Mayor  
San Jose, California

Bill de Blasio  
Mayor  
New York City, New York

Lori Lightfoot  
Mayor  
Chicago, Illinois

London N. Breed  
Mayor  
San Francisco, California

Martin J. Walsh  
Mayor  
Boston, Massachusetts

Keisha Lance Bottoms  
Mayor  
Atlanta, Georgia

Mike Coffman  
Mayor  
Aurora, Colorado

Kate Gallego  
Mayor  
Phoenix, AZ

Libby Schaaf  
Mayor  
Oakland, California

John Giles  
Mayor  
Mesa, Arizona

Miguel Pulido  
Mayor  
Santa Ana, California

Lily Mei  
Mayor  
Fremont, California

Cassie Franklin  
Mayor  
Everett, Washington

Darrell Steinberg  
Mayor  
Sacramento, California

Christopher Cabaldon  
Mayor  
West Sacramento, California

Harry Sidhu  
Mayor  
Anaheim, California

Lyda Krewson  
Mayor  
St. Louis, Missouri

Keith James  
Mayor  
West Palm Beach, Florida

Tom Barrett  
Mayor  
Milwaukee, WI

Peter Weiss  
Mayor  
Oceanside, California

Mark W. Mitchell  
Mayor  
Tempe, Arizona

Ethan Berkowitz  
Mayor  
Anchorage, Alaska

Noam Bramson  
Mayor  
New Rochelle, New York

Greg Fischer  
Mayor  
Louisville, Kentucky

Pauline Cutter  
Mayor  
Leandro, California

Sylvester Turner  
Mayor  
Houston, Texas

Svante Myrick  
Mayor  
Ithaca, New York

Jesse Arreguin  
Mayor  
Berkeley, California

Michael Tubbs  
Mayor  
Stockton, California

Regina Romero  
Mayor  
Tucson, Arizona

Kevin McKeown  
Mayor  
Santa Monica, California

Rusty Bailey  
Mayor  
Riverside, California

Dan Horrigan  
Mayor  
Akron, Ohio

Robert Garcia  
Mayor  
Long Beach, California

Barbara Halliday  
Mayor  
Hayward, California

Richard David  
Mayor  
Binghamton, New York

Thomas Roach  
Mayor  
White Plains, New York

Ted Wheeler  
Mayor  
Portland, Oregon

Lovely Warren  
Mayor  
Rochester, New York