

Prepared Statement of  
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Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Jordan, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I appreciate the support of Congress and this Committee's commitment to a successful 2020 Census.

The 2020 Census has begun in remote Alaska, and Census Day, April 1, is approaching. Our mission is to count every person living in the United States once, only once, and in the right place. We appreciate the support provided by Secretary Ross, the President, this Committee, the Congress, and our partners across the nation. We are pleased to report that we are **on mission, on target, and on budget** for a complete and accurate count. Despite declining trends in survey participation rates across the globe — we are challenging communities across the country to work with us to improve self-response rates in 2020 over those in 2010. Our main message to the nation is a simple one: “Responding to the 2020 Census is easy, safe, and important.”

**It is easy** because for the first time everyone will be invited to respond on-line, or they can choose to respond by phone or the traditional response through the mail. The new options create improved efficiencies, relieve burdens on respondents, and reassure people that assistance is but a phone call away. Using the new technologies (i.e., internet and phones in addition to paper), makes it the easiest census to respond to in our nation's history. People can reply almost anywhere, at any time.

**It is safe** because we are using the best technologies and practices to protect data confidentiality and reduce cybersecurity risks. For the 2020 Census, like all of our statistical programs, we assiduously follow the strict federal law protecting the confidentiality of census responses from every person. That is simply how we do business in the Census Bureau—no exceptions.

**It is important** because the constitutionally mandated count is used to apportion seats in the House of Representatives; to allocate hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funds to state and local governments; and to guide critical decisions by communities, governments at all levels, businesses, and many others. Since the advent of the information age and the recognition of the importance of data-driven policies and practices, decennial Census data are becoming more useful and important by the day.

We are pleased to have this opportunity to highlight the progress we have made in a number of critical areas since our hearing in July.

## **Recruitment and Hiring**

Last October, we began recruiting for peak operations. This spring, we will hire from 300,000 up to 500,000 temporary census workers to conduct nonresponse follow-up and other field operations critical to the success of 2020. Depending upon location, hourly pay rates range from \$13.50 to \$30 per hour. People can easily apply online at [2020census.gov/jobs](https://2020census.gov/jobs). Census takers generally are hired to work in their own neighborhoods and are trained to be respectful while conducting interviews. By hiring locally, we are also able to ensure census takers have the right cultural sensitivity and language skills to get a better count. We take the personal safety of our employees and the public very seriously and have incorporated these concerns into our training for all Census Bureau field staff.

We already have more than 2.3 million applicants, and with approximately 25,000 new applications each day, we are on track toward our very ambitious recruitment goals. These numbers reflect our goals for recruiting that build in the contingency of approximately five applicants for each expected hire. The recruiting goal is also based on projected self-response rates. Overall, we remain confident that we will have the workforce in place to get the job done. Our recruitment efforts are focused on the areas where we need more applicants. A large pool of applicants helps us absorb attrition and ensure local hires will support the 2020 census across the nation.

We are conducting job fairs in areas where recruitment is most critical, including historically hard-to-count areas. We have mailed millions of post cards to potential applicants. We are targeting communications and advertising (digital and print) in areas with low application rates. We are partnering with colleges and universities to find applicants across the country for these positions. We ask you to help in this effort. Please let your constituents know that we are recruiting for thousands of temporary and term positions. When we conduct our field operations, we hire locally. Please direct interested constituents to [2020Census.gov/jobs](https://2020Census.gov/jobs). If you do not have this link on your websites, please consider adding it today. If there are colleges and universities – or other prospective partners – that have yet to respond to our national call to action, we would appreciate your help in reaching out to them. We are asking you to consider every channel for communicating with the public, particularly social media platforms, to help us spread the word about these exciting employment and public service opportunities.

## **Innovations since 2010**

We have made many improvements and innovations over the past decade to prepare for the 2020 Census and ensure a complete and accurate count. These include but are not limited to:

- Better technologies and improved processes for canvassing neighborhoods and developing complete and updated address listings and maps;
- New options for responding beyond traditional paper forms—by internet or phone;
- More language assistance than ever;
- Expanded and more efficient customer assistance phone centers with instant assistance in English and 12 non-English languages;
- A language program and multi-lingual resources to reach 99.6 percent of our population;
- Hiring nearly twice as many partnership specialists to recruit and assist more than 300,000 partners to help us reach hard-to-count populations;
- Better technologies and more efficient processes for enumerators;

- A very sophisticated and greatly expanded media campaign with new ways to reach people and communities, including hard-to-count populations; and
- Advanced information technologies, security safeguards and privacy protections to strengthen confidentiality protections and practices.

These innovations, supported by time-tested operations, have increased our confidence that we are well-prepared for 2020. These and other innovations are explained further in an interim report on 2020 Census innovations that will be finished soon and provided to the committee.

This report will explain actions taken to identify where to count, motivate people to respond, facilitate self-response, streamline nonresponse follow up, tabulate data and results, and ensure data security. The U.S. Census Bureau is taking greater efforts than ever to ensure we count every person living in this country once, and only once, and in the right place.

### **Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Program**

One innovation I want to specifically highlight is our mobile questionnaire assistance program. We thank Congress for working with us on this program and supporting its funding. Our program is focused on improving self-response in low response areas. Census staff will work with community organizations, go directly into neighborhoods, visit events, participate in gatherings, and enter high traffic areas with Census-issued mobile devices. These capabilities will make responding to the census easier than ever before. During our peak operations, we will be able to allocate resources to areas of greatest need by tracking self-responses in real time and identifying wherever self-response rates may be falling below targets.

Below are highlights on other key issues for the 2020 Census.

### **Protecting Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a core part of the Census Bureau's culture, and we reinforce privacy safeguards across all statistical programs and activities. Title 13 of the U.S. Code provides the strongest protections. The law requires responses to Census Bureau surveys and censuses to be kept confidential and used only for statistical purposes, and we will be clearly communicating our commitment to protecting confidentiality as part of our media campaign. The same protections apply whether the data are sourced directly from surveys or obtained from other agencies. All staff working at the Census Bureau, whether they regularly work with confidential information or not, take a lifetime oath to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondent information. Unlawful disclosure is a federal crime punishable by a \$250,000 fine, five years in prison, or both. We do NOT share confidential, personally identifiable information with any other agency, including law enforcement, the Department of Homeland Security, or anyone else. The commitment from the Administration on confidentiality is clear in the President's executive order: "Under my Administration, the data confidentiality protections in Title 13 shall be fully respected."

The Census Bureau uses all responses to all censuses and surveys and all data sets obtained from other agencies only to produce anonymous statistics. We take every precaution to keep individual responses confidential, and we are adopting cutting-edge technologies and methodologies to protect the 2020 Census data.

The Census Bureau is modernizing its disclosure avoidance methods considered by experts to be the gold standard for modern privacy protection in computer science and cryptography. We are using the best available technologies and methods to protect the privacy and confidentiality of every respondent, while still providing accurate data needed to inform vital programs. Data from the 2020 Census will be protected to prevent disclosure and retain the trust of the American people.

### **Reaching the Hard-to-Count**

“Hard to count” generally refers to groups that experience lower response rates because they are hard to locate, contact, persuade, or interview. A complete and accurate count depends on reaching areas with historically low response rates. **Reaching all areas of our nation to achieve a complete and accurate count is our highest priority for the 2020 Census.** Census staff and I have traveled across the nation to learn first-hand about challenges inherent in enumerating hard-to-count populations. Census Bureau employees and partners are employing new technologies and working smarter and harder than ever to meet needs in hard-to-count areas. Together, we are identifying and applying best practices to further enhance the effectiveness of Census 2020 operations. We are hearing from partners who are your constituents and incorporating their feedback into our work. Many of the best ideas come from local communities. For example, we are working closely with Complete Count Committees across the nation to raise public awareness, inform communities about the importance of the census, and encourage everyone to participate. Through these committees, and other partnerships, we are expanding locally based targeted outreach, with a particular focus on hard-to-count households in urban and rural areas and young children wherever they may live. The Census Bureau will support and build upon these productive relationships throughout the 2020 Census.

Our comprehensive communications and partnership efforts focus on educating and motivating members of communities designated as hard-to-count areas due to low self-response rates in prior censuses. We have documented these areas and will track them continuously while executing the 2020 Census through our web-based Response Outreach Area Mapper (ROAM) tool, which is available to the public. Additionally, the Census Bureau will reach these communities as part of our Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU) operation should we not receive self-response after numerous mailings.

Our advertising teams have developed compelling messaging emphasizing the safety of answering the 2020 Census and the tangible benefits for local communities. We are highlighting that census data guides the allocation of hundreds of billions of dollars in funding for vital programs and benefits at the federal, state, and local levels. These data shape critical daily decisions made by the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.

### **Children**

As noted above, our outreach efforts will emphasize the need for respondents to identify and include young children. Messaging about the importance of including all children living in a household has been woven into the communications campaign.

The Census Bureau is partnering with national and local education and childcare-related organizations to use other avenues to reach families, teachers, and social service providers and others. Our improved and expanded efforts to reach hard-to-count populations reach far beyond

our communications campaign. The efforts are embedded into how we conduct 2020 Census operations. For example, to ensure we count young children, we are training enumerators to ask specific questions about the presence of children when conducting interviews. They will ask households to make sure that all children are included regardless of living arrangements, including foster children, children living with grandparents, and other living situations.

### **Persons in Rural Areas**

Using data from the American Community Survey and the Federal Communications Commission, we identified areas with lower Internet access, as well as areas with a large proportion of households that may not use the Internet (such as the elderly). We will include a paper questionnaire in our first mailing for these specific areas. Every non-responding household will receive another paper questionnaire on the fourth mailing. The telephone option is also available. In areas without well-established mailing addresses linked to locations (P.O. boxes, rural routes, etc.), we will hand deliver questionnaires and make sure we know where to follow up if the households do not respond.

### **American Indian and Alaska Native Populations**

The Census Bureau has conducted 17 tribal consultations with federal and state recognized tribal governments to discuss planning, operations, and communications for American Indian and Alaska Native communities for the 2020 Census. In addition, we will hire local enumerators who understand and represent these communities. We hired tribal partnership specialists earlier in the decade, compared to 2010, to work with tribal nations to appoint tribal liaisons, and to form tribal complete count committees.

### **People Experiencing Homelessness**

We also have specific operations to count persons experiencing homelessness. We work with shelters, soup kitchens, and other service organizations to count the people they serve, and we send enumerators to outdoor areas where people may be staying.

### **Language Assistance**

In 2020, we will have more language assistance than ever before for a census. People can respond on the internet and over the phone in English and 12 non-English languages, covering more than 99 percent of all households and 87 percent of limited-English-speaking households. This is an increase from the five languages offered for self-response in 2010. Language guides and additional support materials will be provided in a total of 59 languages.

### **Natural Disasters**

The Census Bureau is committed to conducting a complete and accurate enumeration for the entire country, including areas that experience disasters immediately prior to or during census operations. Should such a disaster occur, the Census Bureau would form a rapid-response team that will immediately assess the event and formulate an action plan to address the specific disaster. The Census Bureau has a contingency plan developed to address the addition of major disasters to our risk registry.

In forming a response plan, the Census Bureau will consider facts such as the timing of the event, the severity, the affected geographic area, access to the affected areas, and other

environmental concerns. For example, when Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico in 2017, we changed our plans in order to conduct Update Leave. The recent earthquakes in Puerto Rico buttress that decision.

This operation will allow additional recovery time for the impacted area before we update locations and will result in Census Bureau staff hand-delivering questionnaires to all locations where people are living in Puerto Rico. We are also conducting Update Leave in areas of the Florida Panhandle affected by Hurricane Michael and areas of California affected by fires in 2018. The Census Bureau will face the challenges of any unexpected event and will take steps necessary to enumerate the population affected by any such event.

### **Cybersecurity**

The American public must trust that we will protect the data they provide. We have designed our cybersecurity program to protect our networks and systems, ensuring they remain resilient in the face of persistent and evolving cyber threats. A key feature of the security is encryption of data at every stage—in transit over the internet, at rest within our systems, and on the enumeration devices. Also, enumeration devices are secured with multiple credentials, and if a device is lost, it will be remotely disabled and its contents permanently deleted. Our cybersecurity program is designed to adapt and respond to a changing threat landscape. We incorporate protections in our technology, have processes to continuously monitor systems, and have a team ready to respond immediately to any potential threat. The Census Bureau works with the Department of Homeland Security, the federal intelligence community, and industry experts to share threat intelligence, giving us the most visibility possible to enable immediate action to protect data.

With this cooperation, we identify threats early so that we may proactively respond and improve security. Our developers and security engineers work together to integrate security into systems design and development. Our systems are independently assessed for cybersecurity before deployment, and ongoing testing of cybersecurity capabilities is conducted throughout the time systems are operational.

### **Systems Readiness**

On February 7, the Census Bureau finalized its decision regarding our internet response system, choosing to deploy two applications for this system. Both provide secure and effective internet response capabilities and exceed the expected internet self-response user load. The one with the greatest capacity was chosen for the public-facing system, and the other will be used for the Census Questionnaire Assistance Centers and phone data collection, while also serving as backup solution in the case of unforeseen events. We tested each solution in order to understand any performance limitations and minimize risks. Based on these results, we firmly believe the application selected for Internet Self Response can provide additional capacity and reduced risk. Importantly, the modular design of the data collection systems enables substitution of either fully integrated application for the other. The decision is a result of solid data analysis from a highly effective testing program and deploys the right application to the right place in our operations.

### **2020 Communications Campaign**

Motivating households to respond directly to the census themselves is one of our most important functions. Self-response saves money and resources and provides better data. The 2020 Census is

benefiting from the most robust public communications and partnership campaign in the history of the decennial census. Our outreach efforts are reaching into every community in the country through paid advertising, public service announcements, partnership materials, our Statistics in Schools program, and national and local events. The theme of our campaign, “Shape Your Future. Start Here” tested very well across all audiences.

By communicating the importance of participating in the 2020 Census to local communities, we hope to overcome many barriers that may inhibit participation. Informational materials for partners to use are available online at [2020census.gov/partners](https://2020census.gov/partners) and will be added on a flow basis.

Last month, on January 21, we celebrated the official kickoff of our enumeration efforts in Toksook Bay, Alaska. We also recently launched our nationwide paid media campaign. In March, we will begin inviting households to respond to the 2020 Census through a national mailing and hand delivery in parts of the country impacted by natural disasters or other special circumstances. We will activate our online questionnaire/census form and begin accepting responses by phone. At that point, our media campaign will be focused on motivating people to respond to the 2020 Census and informing them how to do it.

Every household will receive a full paper form to respond to the 2020 Census if they have not already responded. Some will receive it in their first mailing, based on areas with low internet access or populations such as the elderly who may not be inclined to respond online. Initial mailings will notify residents in a dozen languages how to obtain further assistance if needed.

In May, we will continue to invite response to the 2020 Census, also reminding Americans that we will begin our Non-Response Follow-Up operation. Our campaign will make sure the public knows that enumerators will soon greet them at their doors if they have not responded.

An important effort in our campaign is countering misinformation and disinformation efforts. Since the 2010 Census, the digital marketing tools available for outreach and targeted communications make it easier to engage different population segments. However, those same tools can be used in misinformation and disinformation campaigns to negatively impact response and participation. Given how quickly information spreads today, the Census Bureau has been working to keep up to date on these trends through partnerships and ongoing work with tech companies such as Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter and Google.

### **National and Local Partnerships**

We are aggressively recruiting partners to be trusted voices in local communities and at the national level to motivate people to respond. We have hired more than 1,500 partnership staff. They are working to establish more than 300,000 volunteer partnerships at the local and regional levels, focusing on diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and other communities. We currently have 266,000 community partners, exceeding the number recorded at the end of 2010 Census, and expect to reach our ambitious goal of 300,000 very soon. Among the states, we have near complete participation in our program to form state complete count committees, which has been a major focus for the 2020 Census, building on lessons learned about their effectiveness in 2010. At the local level we are proud to have over 10,000 complete count committees. We have over 500 national partners and supporters.

Key partners include the AARP, the American Library Association, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Partnership for America's Children, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, the National Urban League, the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Volunteers of America, and large employers and corporate leaders like Tyson Foods, Walmart, Comcast and many more.

### **Cooperation with the Government Accountability Office (GAO)**

The Census Bureau has worked closely with GAO throughout the decade, and their contributions have supported our preparations for the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau has devoted significant resources to address GAO's recommendations. GAO has noted improvements we have made in many areas, including Lifecycle Cost Estimation, Operational Innovation, and Cyber Security/Systems Readiness. We have officially closed almost 75% GAO's recommendations, and we are managing risks effectively, in accordance with its guidance. Our work with GAO and the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General (OIG) will help ensure a successful 2020 Census, and we want to continue our strong and constructive relationship.

### **Closing**

We are especially grateful to you, the Congress, for helping us to reach this critical point in our preparations. We appreciate your funding and support for 2020 Census programs and operations. Members of Congress, on both sides of the aisle, have:

- Become 2020 Census Congressional Partners;
- Convened town hall meetings to keep constituents informed about the 2020 Census;
- Recorded and posted Public Service Announcements to further raise awareness and assist in recruiting;
- Sponsored job fairs to help us reach recruiting goals; and
- Supported record numbers of Complete Count Committees and partnerships throughout the nation.

Your outreach to constituents, collaboration with partners, and affirmation of the importance of 2020 Census is having a powerful impact. You are helping us fill positions and engaging the public as never before. As trusted voices in your communities, no one can better amplify our message — *participating in the 2020 Census is safe, easy, and important*. And when you engage constituents and partners, please emphasize that the Census Bureau is legally required to keep all responses strictly confidential. We do so not only as a matter of law, but also as a matter of organizational culture and professional practice. I look forward to our continued work together. Thank you for your continued support. I will be glad to answer your questions.