

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3005

March 31, 2022

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

The Honorable Robert Santos
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
Office of the Director
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Secretary Raimondo and Director Santos:

We write to you with serious concerns about the 2020 Census and its undercounting of Hispanic or Latino, Black, and Native American individuals. We request information regarding steps that the U.S. Census Bureau is taking to ensure that every person is counted and how we can jointly address the decades-long problem of undercounting minority communities in the country.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Census Bureau released its National Census Coverage Estimates for People in the United States by Demographic Characteristics, which is a 2020 Post-Enumeration Survey Estimation Report. This report revealed an undercount of Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Some Other Race populations.¹ The 2020 Census undercounted the Hispanic or Latino population by 4.99 percent, up from 1.54 percent in 2010 and more than three times the percentage of the previous census. Similarly, individuals who identify as “some other race” had an undercount three times that of the previous census. In the case of Black or African American individuals, the report revealed an undercount of 3.30 percent, nearly twice the undercount of the 2010 Census. Finally, American Indian or Alaska Natives in reservations had the greatest undercount of all at 5.64 percent.

We are aware of the challenges the U.S. Census Bureau faced to conduct the 2020 Census. A devastating pandemic was detrimental to the Bureau’s outreach, data collection process, and other aspects of the census operation. However, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump

¹ <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/coverage-measurement/pes/national-census-coverage-estimates-by-demographic-characteristics.pdf>

Administration made significant efforts to depress participation in the 2020 Census, particularly in immigrant and Latino communities. The prior Administration insisted on numerous occasions on the inclusion of a citizenship question in the non-partisan 2020 Census. It went so far as to ask the Supreme Court to review a case and decide whether a citizenship question could be included in the 2020 Census.² Although this question was ultimately not included in the 2020 Census, and despite numerous outreach efforts, these actions, and the public coverage thereof, undoubtedly influenced minority communities' participation in the latest Census, particularly in the Hispanic and Latino populations.

The undercounting of Latino, Black and Native American individuals deeply affects already disadvantaged communities in a plethora of ways, most acutely in the allocation of federal funding and government representation. As you are aware, an accurate decennial census is not only a constitutional responsibility of the federal government, but its results determine the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, guide the allocation of nearly \$1.5 trillion in federal funds annually, and are used to draw legislative districts within the states.

We ask the U.S. Census Bureau to consider ways to correct the undercount in the annual population estimates derived from 2020 Census data and reiterate its commitment to counting all persons in future decennial censuses. In addition, we ask the Bureau to provide a plan for how it will ensure such undercounting in the four groups outlined above does not repeat itself.

We appreciate your attention to this issue, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



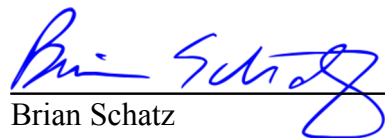
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator




Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator

² https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/trump-administration-asks-supreme-court-to-quickly-take-up-census-citizenship-question/2019/01/22/93734014-1e73-11e9-8e21-59a09ff1e2a1_story.html



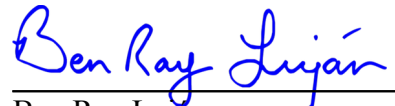
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



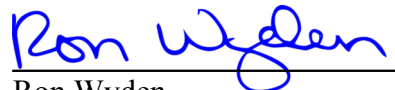
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



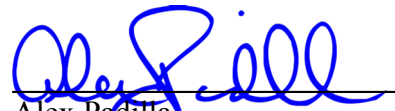
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



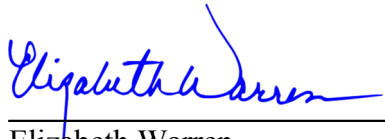
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



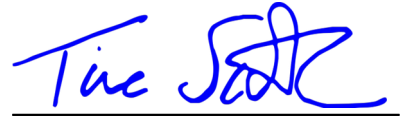
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



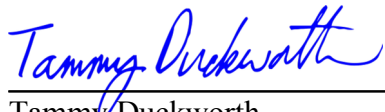
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



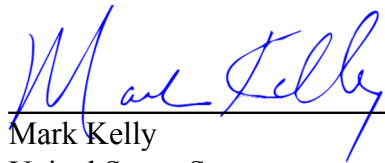
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



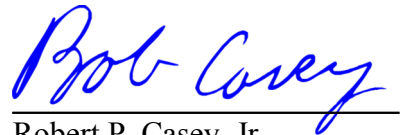
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
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