



## COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

1825 K Street, NW · Suite 411 · Washington, DC 20006 · 202.223.2532 · Fax 202.223.2538 · [www.chn.org](http://www.chn.org)

August 7, 2020

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Coalition on Human Needs, I am writing to urge you to extend statutory reporting deadlines for apportionment and redistricting data for the 2020 Census to April 30, 2021, extending the deadline to transmit state population totals to that date, prohibiting the Bureau and the President from sending the relevant data to the Congress in advance of those deadlines, and to allocate \$400 million to address Census Bureau operational challenges.

The extension of the deadline and funding increase should be included in the urgently needed COVID-19 relief package. Failure to extend the deadline will result in hundreds of billions of dollars lost to states for the next decade.

The [Coalition on Human Needs](http://www.chn.org) is a voluntary partner of the U.S. Census Bureau in its work to carry out a complete and accurate 2020 Census. The independent national organizations making up the Coalition on Human Needs, including human service providers, faith organizations, labor, civil rights, and other anti-poverty advocacy groups, have been working hard to reach out to millions of people nationwide to encourage them to participate in the Census. We have been particularly focused on the extra efforts necessary to reach groups that have been disproportionately missed in previous counts: children (especially young children), communities of color, rural areas, and low-income people. Those efforts have been delayed and impeded by the pandemic, and we fully supported the Census Bureau's initial recommendation to extend Census operations through October 31, 2020 and to extend the statutory deadline to April 30, 2021. Now we are dismayed to see that expert views of the professional staff of the Census Bureau have been ignored as the Trump Administration has withdrawn the request to extend the statutory deadline and has announced that operations to collect Census information will cease a month earlier, at September 30. They have said they are doing this to comply with current statutory requirements. The House has already approved the extension to April 30, 2021 in its May 15 COVID-19 legislation. The Senate must do the same or the accuracy of the 2020 Census will be seriously undermined.

At this point, well under two-thirds of the population has responded; even worse, barely half the households in areas with a very high risk of undercounting young children have responded. The Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU) that includes Census staff door-to-door operations has been unavoidably delayed by the pandemic. If essential in-person operations are cut short, very large numbers of children, rural areas, low-income people, and communities of color will be missed. The states with the [lowest response rates](#), as of July 23, are Montana (56%), Vermont (56%), Maine (54%), West Virginia (54%), New Mexico (52%) and Alaska (49%).

An inaccurate count will mean that \$1.5 trillion in funding (about \$900 billion a year) distributed to states through formulas based on the decennial census count will not be fairly distributed, affecting critically needed programs such as Medicaid and education funding for the next decade.

This will cost communities in your state resources that can ill afford to lose, especially considering the expanded needs they are trying to address because of the pandemic. For example, Title I K-12 education funding is based on census counts. The lost income to states is [estimated](#) at \$1,700 per year per poor child age 5-17 missed. States are now making cuts in education programs because of plummeting revenues, despite the additional costs of responding to COVID-19 health safety requirements. Losing still more funding targeted to help the children who need help the most is unthinkable. Medicaid funding is similarly essential for states, especially in a pandemic; the median state loss per person missed in Medicaid funding from an undercount is \$1,091.

In an [August 5 statement](#) by four previous U.S. Census Bureau directors, they warn: “Having helped to plan, execute or lead five decennial censuses serving nine Presidents of both parties, our expert opinion is that failing to extend the deadlines to April 30, 2021 will result in seriously incomplete enumerations in many areas across our country.”

Please do not allow our constitutionally mandated Census, a mainstay of our democracy, to be undermined. Your help and your vote to extend the statutory deadline, to allow the count to continue, and to ensure that by preventing the transmission to Congress in advance of the deadline is essential.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Wine", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Executive Director