

Prepared Statement of
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Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Comer, and members of the Committee, I am honored to be with you today. I would like to congratulate Ranking Member Comer on his recent appointment. I appreciate the support of Congress and this Committee's commitment to a successful 2020 Census.

The U.S. Census Bureau is a nonpartisan government agency, and the principal Federal statistical agency. We conduct our work in accordance with federal laws, regulations, policies, and applicable court rulings. We do not set policy, nor do we control the use of its data products. The Census Bureau will always maintain the highest standards of scientific integrity and transparency about the data we produce.

Ultimately, our ability to produce any data is dependent upon successful completion of those data collection operations, which face significant challenges in the coming weeks. Meeting and overcoming those challenges is our top priority at this time. The women and men of the Census Bureau have undertaken extraordinary efforts during this unprecedented time of a deadly pandemic to keep the 2020 Census on track and prepare for expanded field operations across the nation to count all who have not yet responded. In addition, we continue to collect data for our vital economic and household surveys and to produce new innovative data to help measure the impact of the pandemic and our economic recovery. The Census Bureau, the estimated half million term employees who soon will be assisting the 2020 Census, the almost 400,000 partnering organizations reaching into all communities, and all members of Congress who continue to support the decennial census with resources and member outreach, deserve the highest praise.

Presidential Memorandum

In response to the July 21, 2020, Presidential Memorandum, the Census Bureau has begun to examine and report on methodologies available to "provide information permitting the President, to the extent practicable, to exercise the President's discretion to carry out the policy" of "the exclusion of illegal aliens from the apportionment base, to the extent feasible and to the maximum extent of the President's discretion under the law," as cited in the President's memorandum.

To be clear, this does not change the Census Bureau's plans for field data collection across the nation. The Memorandum does not change our data collection operations, our outreach efforts, and all the field work on which we brief the chair's and the ranking member's staffs weekly. We

will continue full steam ahead with our mission of counting every person, counting them once, and counting them in the right place. In fact, this is spelled out in the Presidential Memorandum itself, which notes: “The Secretary shall also include in that report information tabulated according to the methodology set forth in Final 2020 Census Residence Criteria and Residence Situations,” which was published in the *Federal Register* in 2018.

Supplemental Request

To help the Census Bureau continue to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, the White House Office of Management and Budget recently submitted a supplemental request of \$1 billion for the 2020 Census. This funding would allow for supplemental hiring, pay incentives, additional outreach and advertising, and replenished contingency funding to provide needed flexibility as the Census Bureau conducts its largest component of the field operation, Nonresponse Follow-up. This flexibility is critical to helping us operate in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis, including accelerated efforts to complete our field data collection as quickly, and safely as possible, while ensuring a complete and accurate count and a timely delivery of quality data.

Since the suspension of field operations in mid-March, the Census Bureau has continually assessed our operational plans, taking into account Federal, state and local guidance, and the status of COVID-19 cases to ensure that we can safely fulfill our mission. Our continuing rigorous analysis led to a phased restart that began in May, and a soft launch of the Nonresponse Follow-up operation that began early in a number of area census offices in mid-July. The supplemental request is an extension of our effort to ensure we are ready to adapt to challenges in the environment.

The Census Bureau is working to complete data collection as soon as possible, as it strives to comply with the law and statutory deadlines.

Self-Response Success and the Status of Operations

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Census self-response has been a tremendous success. We are now at a 62.6 percent response rate, with more than 92 million households counted. We expect this rate will continue to increase as we approach the official start of Nonresponse Follow-up and will continue until it ends. The safe, secure, and easy internet response option has allowed people to quickly respond using a computer, tablet, or smart phone. More than 79 million households have chosen to respond using the internet, and our response system has not had a single minute of down time since we first invited people to respond online on March 12, 2020.

Of course, no matter how easy and safe the internet option is, we expected that some people would prefer or need other options. Accordingly, we also employed easy paper and telephone options. So far nearly 18 million households have responded using a paper form, and another 1.4 million have chosen to respond by phone.

All forms of self-response continued during our recent suspension of operations in the field that involved close human interactions. There were some difficulties staffing our call centers and Paper Data Capture Centers due to the pandemic, but we have implemented processes and

procedures to overcome those challenges safely. We successfully sent up to five mailings and an additional mailing to areas where post office boxes are the only mailing addresses. A sixth mailing was added in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It began on July 22, and is designed to reach approximately 34 million nonresponding households.

Update Leave Operation

Update Leave, our operation to hand-deliver packets to housing units that do not receive regular mail service had to be suspended in March. We began resuming this work in May. The Update Leave operation is now 99.6 percent completed, with the remaining areas located primarily on tribal lands that have limited or no access due to the pandemic. We are closely coordinating with those tribal governments to ensure a complete and accurate count. In sum, nearly every household in the country has received their invitation to respond.

Counting College Students

We are undertaking a new special operation to ensure a complete and accurate count of college students. The Census Residence Criteria, finalized in 2018, requires that college students be counted where they live or stay most of the time on April 1 of the Census year, and that means in many cases on the college campus or in the campus town. On-campus students are already well covered in our Group Quarters operation, where the institutions are providing us the information from administrative records or a listing.

To better count those students who live off campus, we are asking universities for the records they have for off-campus students. On June 17, Census Bureau staff began contacting college administrators to ask for administrative records with the addresses of the off-campus students. I also sent a letter to college and university presidents across the nation to ask their support in having their staff provide these vital records. This information is critical to help us with challenges stemming from the virus and ensures that students are counted in the right place.

I can assure you that the Census Bureau will protect the privacy of students in this regard, as we do with all sensitive protected data. Strong privacy protections in the law apply to any personal information we receive, whether from respondents directly, or from records from universities and government agencies, or from other sources. It is critical that we receive this information as soon as possible.

Nonresponse Follow-up

The largest component of our field operation, Nonresponse Follow-up, has begun. We implemented a soft launch in a selected areas where we could do so safely to effectively launch systems and get a head start on the operation. The first six Area Census Offices (ACOs) began work on July 16, and six more began July 23. We have hired 14,700 staff so far in these offices.

On July 30, an additional 35 ACOs are scheduled to begin this work. Also, we are announcing this week that 40 more ACOs will start work early in a third group of soft launch locations, beginning on August 6. The rest are scheduled to begin on August 11.

We are announcing this week two supplemental initiatives during Nonresponse Follow-up to increase self-response. In September we will be sending a seventh mailing including an

additional questionnaire to the lowest responding tracts. Plans for the seventh mailing are being developed based on continued self-response rates and early Nonresponse Follow-up results. Also, census takers will attempt to contact some households by phone. Details for both the seventh mailing and phone contact strategy are being finalized, and we will be pleased to share more details with the committee soon.

For further messaging, the Census Bureau is beginning a new email campaign in low responding areas. Emails will go to all households that the Census Bureau has contact information for in census block groups with a response rate lower than 50 percent. More than 20 million households are expected to receive these emails. We are continuing to review the use of SMS text messages and will make an announcement prior to deploying that outreach.

Health and Safety of Census Bureau Staff and the American Public

Our commitment throughout the 2020 Census is to protect every employee and the American people during interactions among staff and with the public. Personal protective equipment (PPE), specific training, and expectations that staff maintain social distancing in interactions with others are key in our commitment to protect people's health during this pandemic. We require census employees who have public interactions to wear a face mask regardless of geographic location.

We have acquired more than 41 million items of PPE for use by our office and field staff. This includes 2.4 million masks, 14.4 million individual gloves, 21.4 million individual disinfectant wipes, 3.6 million individual hand sanitizer bottles for field staff use, and 48,000 gallons of hand sanitizer for use in census facilities. The need for additional purchases is being assessed.

Hiring

For staffing, we have more than three million applicants available for consideration as temporary census workers, and we continue receiving about 1,500 new applicants each day. This deep pool permits us to fill needed positions to conduct the 2020 Census. Our 248 Area Census Offices are finishing up the hiring process for the approximate 500,000 temporary census workers. To date, more than 900,000 job offers have been accepted. This large number of offers is needed to cover attrition. These individuals are in various stages of the hiring process. Approximately 700,000 have completed fingerprinting, and 500,000 have passed the background check and are readying for onboarding as employees.

We continue working to overcome hiring and onboarding challenges caused by the pandemic. Unlike prior censuses, concern with the pandemic is estimated to increase the number of no shows to training sessions, as well as the number of employees who complete training but decline to show up for work. It is too early to measure a trend, but so far deployment numbers are lower than expected. Furthermore, many times our in-person onboarding sites have been closed at the last minute due to local pandemic related conditions, requiring trainees to be rescheduled at other locations on other days. Training is now primarily online, but trainees are currently required to have a session in person with supervisors.

We will provide an updated analysis in the coming weeks as more offices begin the Nonresponse Follow-up operation. To overcome these challenges, the ACO managers are inviting significantly more people to trainings so that the net number of trained individuals is sufficient

for field work. Also, the ACOs will continue to conduct replacement trainings on an ongoing basis to ensure the non-response follow-up operation is fully staffed. The Census Field Supervisors will offer more phone support to trainees to help those who need more training on using the smartphone enumeration device. Currently, we are recruiting additional applicants in specific geographies to ensure we have enough qualified workers in these areas. To help with onboarding, we are extending the times for fingerprinting sites so that replacement hires can be cleared more quickly in order to attend training sessions.

Partnership Work to Promote Response

Our active partnership efforts have been vital to promote the 2020 Census, especially as we adjust for the pandemic. With nearly 400,000 local partners across the country, we are working with local and regional partners, including Complete Count Committees, local and state governments, community leaders, and organizations geared toward hard-to-count populations. When I was last before the committee in February, we had 266,000 partners. The ambitious goal of 300,000 was achieved before March and exceeds the 257,000 by the completion of the 2010 Census. These trusted community voices amplify our outreach work and persuade hard-to-count populations to respond to the 2020 Census.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, partnership staff generally were restricted to virtual outreach from mid-March until early June. Partnership specialists received detailed guidance during this period on how to conduct outreach from home and how to encourage partners to host virtual events. Events have included Create-a-Thons to develop tailored messaging for specific areas and groups, town halls, conference calls, webinars, and other virtual events hosted by our partners. Local governments and other partners are including 2020 Census messaging during COVID-19 meetings and news conferences to repeat the message that the easiest and safest way to be counted in the 2020 Census is to self-respond from home, eliminating the need to speak with a census taker in-person. Staff are working with partners to conduct car parades in many hard-to-count neighborhoods with low Internet availability. We are shipping 2020 Census promotional materials directly to partners, including for use at food distribution centers.

In-person events are now allowed with appropriate precautions and compliance with state and local guidelines, including required face coverings and social distancing and limits on the number of attendees. Partnership staff are supporting the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) operation. We had to delay and scale back this operation due to the pandemic, but now partnership staff are working to identify MQA sites where people go when they leave home, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and other places with essential services. In most instances, these MQA sites are outdoors, and they adhere to local, state and federal health and safety guidelines.

We have great stories and examples of successful partnership work in local areas across the country. Here are just a few examples of the ongoing outreach:

- A number of partners in New York City are actively promoting the census, including Mobile Questionnaire Assistance events at Tompkins Square Greenmarket the Grand Street Guild meal distribution with Chairwoman Maloney.
- Students in Hopkins County, Kentucky, in Ranking Member Comer's district developed creative 2020 Census public service announcements for Kentucky communities.

- Firefighters from seven cities across Georgia competed in a video challenge. The contest highlighted the importance of 2020 Census data that helps determine federal funding for public safety and emergency management teams, and it encouraged Georgia residents to fill out their census forms.
- In Rochester, New York, Mayor Lovely A. Warren directed city officials to mail five facemasks to every address within the city limits, and the mailing included census messaging encouraging residents to complete the 2020 questionnaire.
- More than 200,000 census flyers were delivered this month to twenty different Latino Grocery Stores in Santa Clara County, California. The printed material was distributed by the store clerks at checkout.
- Hundreds of people participated in the Voces de la Frontera Bike/Car Caravan in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this week. Voces de la Frontera is a membership-based community organization led by low-wage workers, immigrants, and youth. Cyclists and cars drove through low-response areas in Milwaukee. This weekly event will continue into the fall to highlight the importance of Census.
- In Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot recently recruited 33-year-old Adam Hollingsworth ("the Census Cowboy") and his horse "Robin" to ride through the 10 communities in the city with the lowest census response rates to encourage residents to respond to the 2020 Census. Lightfoot compared it to using the Bat-Signal in the fictional city of Gotham.

Our national partners continue to work with us and do great work. Since June 1, our staff have been supporting partners who are doing direct service and performing in-person work. Examples include national food distribution efforts, providing partners and communities with 43,000 grocery tote bags; 500 drawstring backpacks; more than 27,000 print materials; 7,500 pens; 5,000 reusable water bottles; more than 5,000 fans; and 32,000 chip clips.

Last weekend we conducted our second 2020 Census Faith Community Weekend of Action. Faith leaders across the country encouraged their congregations to respond to the census with messaging emphasizing that the census is important, easy, and safe. Many partners such as The United Way, Walmart, and Starbucks, to name just a few, are sharing these messages to their members, employees, and customers. Facebook recently launched its second notification promoting the importance of responding, linking directly to our website [2020Census.gov](https://www.2020Census.gov), and encouraging people to share the message with their friends. We are seeing dramatic results.

The Statistics in Schools Program, and our web and social media work are also at full throttle. We are engaging school districts around the country as they reach out to parents and students to adapt this program to the current environment, all while promoting participation in the 2020 Census.

Last week, I was honored to provide a video address to the national conference of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, thanking them for their service and encouraging their efforts to promote the 2020 census and self-responses.

Expanding and Extending the 2020 Census Integrated Communications Campaign

In the face of the pandemic and other challenges, we expanded the Integrated Communications Contract from \$500 million to \$700 million, and the media buy increased from \$323.5 million to \$383.4 million. This expansion enables us to continue our advertising and communications efforts through the summer and into the fall. Along with TV, radio, and print, we are employing extensive digital advertising and driving conversations on social media outlets, targeting the messaging to low-responding areas and populations.

Back in March, the Census Bureau was one of the first organizations to develop advertising sensitive to the current environment. We extended what we call the “motivation phase” of the campaign until August, to get as many people as possible to respond to the Census. We are currently in the middle of our “July Push” for self-response, for which we created new advertising. And we have increased our media spend with local advertising in every part of the country, including rural and other areas with low response rates. Beginning August 11, and running through the end of September, we will run advertising in areas with the lowest response rates and where nonresponse workloads are heaviest.

In early August, the national campaign will inform the country that we soon will be knocking on doors in the Nonresponse Follow-up operation. The advertisements were redesigned to show our enumerators in masks and practicing social distancing. The messages will remind everyone that it is not too late to respond.

All components of the communications and partnership program are being leveraged to amplify our messaging. Our earned media teams are targeting priority areas emphasized in the paid media strategy. Approaches include localized media outreach focused on diverse mass, multicultural, and hard-to-count audiences. We are creating customized detailed response rate media materials, leveraging local trusted voices for interviews, conducting radio and satellite media tours with our national and regional spokespeople, and hosting multicultural media briefings and press conferences for reaching hard-to-count audiences and populations.

Your outreach to constituents, collaboration with partners, and affirmation of the importance of 2020 Census are making a difference. As trusted voices in your communities, you amplify our message -- *participating in the 2020 Census is safe, easy, and important*. As 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.

We are leaving no stone unturned in our communications, partnerships, operations, and continuing efforts to count the nation’s population, despite our challenging environment. Key to success is Congress’ continued support. We appreciate your strong support for 2020 Census programs and operations, and the fact that almost all Members are actively engaged as 2020 Census Congressional Partners. The Census Bureau, our many 2020 Census partners and stakeholders, and all communities across the nation thank you. We look forward to our continued work together in accomplishing our shared mission of conducting a complete and accurate count.