

Washington State leaders demand an extension of statutory reporting deadlines and \$400 million to address continued 2020 Census challenges.

August 13, 2020

**The Honorable Nancy Pelosi**

Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**The Honorable Kevin McCarthy**

Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**The Honorable Mitch McConnell**

Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**The Honorable Charles Schumer**

Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy,

**We, Community Leaders working across the State of Washington to ensure historically undercounted communities are counted in the 2020 Census, are writing in support of Representative Jayapal and the Washington State Congressional Delegation's recommendation to "extend statutory reporting deadlines for apportionment and redistricting data and to allocate \$400 million to address continued 2020 Census challenges and modify the deadline to transmit state populations totals to April 30, 2021."**

The decision to prematurely end the Non-response Follow-up stage of the 2020 Census is yet another in a series of damaging political actions taken to disempower historically undercounted communities, especially Black and Indigenous People, Communities of Color, and Immigrant Communities. Despite the underfunding of critical testing and plan development phases of the operation, this Administration's attempts to include a citizenship question on the 2020 Census form, and the President's Executive Order to exclude undocumented immigrants from the Congressional apportionment process, **community-based organizations and leaders have worked tirelessly through pandemic-related delays and constant adjustments to the 2020 Census process to ensure that our communities are counted.**

Our State Legislature allocated \$15 million to ensure a fair and accurate count. Philanthropy in the State of Washington has contributed more than \$3 million to this effort. We, the signatories below, and the organizations we represent, stepped up to close gaps in community outreach and engagement left by an under-resourced Census Bureau. We leveraged our relational capital within communities to support the 2020 Census, and we informed and encouraged community members in good faith, based on the procedures and timelines communicated by the Census Bureau.

**And we have been very successful: Washington is currently one of only five states to surpass its 2010 Census response rate and has the 3rd highest self-response rate in the U.S. (compared to 21st in 2010). However, we have still only counted 69% of our community. That means more than three in ten households in our State have yet to be counted.**

To prematurely end the Non-response Follow-up period of the Census now is to discard the investments and efforts of our community for a complete and accurate count, especially in rural communities. To politicize the 2020 Census and take this action contradicts its very purpose of inclusivity and representativeness shared by the Census Bureau and community-based partners. These actions devalue and diminish our relational capital in a way that will damage future census counts in 2030 and beyond.

To prematurely end the 2020 Census sends more than a clear message that we do not all count in this country. It diminishes and erases our communities and robs us of the resources and funding to which we are entitled. At a time in our nation when we are confronting our legacy of oppression and systemic racism, we ask: How can we begin to create opportunities for economic prosperity and progress in this country if we so callously deny the presence of the very people who live, work, and pay their taxes here?

Right now, undercounted communities are facing unprecedented need. Beyond informing the resources communities receive for things they've already paid for, like safe housing, education, access to healthcare, and more, as our nation battles the spread of COVID-19, the 2020 Census will determine how federal relief dollars are spent in our communities for the next 10 years.

Counting only some of the people that call this country home systematically and effectively severs too many of our access points to resources we need to survive and thrive.

**This is a violation of the Constitution and our rights.**

**We ask you to support our United States Congress Members' recommendation to extend statutory reporting deadlines for apportionment and redistricting data and to allocate \$400 million to address continued 2020 Census challenges and modify the deadline to transmit state population totals to April 30, 2021.**

We are asking you to prioritize the fairness, completeness and accuracy of the 2020 Census count over political maneuvering and gamesmanship.

We demand to be counted.

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