

# Census 2020: What You Need to Know

## FACTS

The United States Census is mandated by the Constitution to count the populations of states and territories every ten years. April 1, 2020 will be the reference day for Census 2020, the 22nd US Census.

Census data is the basis for apportionment of the House of Representatives; ten states lost seats after the 2010 Census. It also guides federal assistance, particularly for grants supporting infrastructure and the social safety net. Medicaid alone accounts for 58 percent of census-guided funding.

## WHAT'S NEW IN 2020

- **Digital:** The 2020 Census will be first to use the Internet as the primary (and preferred) means of collecting household data.
- **Citizenship:** For the first time, the Census will include a question regarding citizenship status, which civil rights groups justly fear will suppress responses in immigrant communities.
  - The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the United States Code, which states that personal information given for the census cannot be published or shared with other government agencies.
  - Yet such information was used to intern Japanese-Americans during WWII.
  - In 1980, the Census Bureau rejected the inclusion of a citizenship question. And in 2009, all eight former Census Bureau directors declared that adding an untested citizenship question “would put the accuracy of the enumeration of communities at risk.”
  - 17 states and DC have sued to block the citizenship question.
- **Administrative Records:** The 2020 Census will verify address data through administrative records. But these records are likely to miss pockets of populations, such as homeless, veterans, poor children and native Americans.

NYC Mayor Bill De Blasio has announced plans to invest \$4.3 million on a campaign to encourage citywide participation in the census and to appoint a city-wide Census Coordinator (not yet appointed).

## HISTORIC CHALLENGES

In 2010, the census missed about 2.1 percent of African-Americans and 1.5 percent of Hispanics nationally, together accounting for some **1.5 million**.

New York City challenged the 2010 Census for overlooking at least 50,000 New Yorkers.

## WHAT WE FEAR IN 2020

**Chill on the poor:** Over one-quarter of New York City's households lack broadband access at home, with a significant percentage of those weighted toward poor communities in the Bronx, those with less than a high school education, and African-American and Hispanic New Yorkers.

The digital aspect of the 2020 Census will be felt most by those without broadband access.

**Chill on Immigrants:** The citizenship question will chill immigrant communities' responses. According to the 2012-16 ACS, over 22 million non-citizens, or 7 percent of the population, reside in the US.

**Unprepared:** NAACP filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the District of Maryland against the US Census Bureau and President Donald Trump, arguing that the federal government's unpreparedness for the 2020 Census is a violation of the Constitution.

The US Conference of Mayors sent a letter to Secretary Ross of the Commerce Department, which houses the Census Bureau, urging Secretary Ross to (a) adequately resource the Integrated Partnership and Communications program that helps to overcome low census reporting; (b) nominate experienced nonpartisan leaders to the Bureau; and (c) reject the Justice Department's request to add a question about the respondent's citizenship status.

## LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE

### *Introduced by Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney*

- H.R. 5359 — 2020 Census Improving Data and Enhanced Accuracy (IDEA): would not allow inclusion of the citizenship question or any other new question unless it was tested for three years and submitted to Congress prior to such inclusion.
  - NY cosponsors: Espaillat, Serrano, Meng, Crowley, Meeks, Velazquez, Engel, Nadler, Rice, and Jeffries
  - Senate companion bill introduced by Sen. Brian Schatz (Hawaii) and co-sponsored by Gillibrand. (Note that as leader, Schumer will rarely co-sponsor bills.)
- H.R. 4013 - 2020 American Census Investment Act: increases appropriations for Census

### **Additional Bills**

- Soto (FL): H.R. 5292 — 2020 Census Accountability Act: This bill requires the Bureau of the Census to establish the Task Force on the 2020 Census, which shall report to Congress on:
  - existing and potential policies and measures that promote full participation in the decennial census by all residents of the United States;
  - potential negative impacts on minority populations resulting from the addition of a citizenship question to the census, including potential impacts on congressional reapportionment, legislative redistricting, and distribution of federal funds;
  - civil rights issues that could be affected with the addition of a citizenship question to the census; and
  - a potential decrease in participation related to the addition of citizenship questions.
- More census bills here:
  - S.2366 — Census Funding Cap Adjustment Act of 2018 Sen. Booker, Cory A. [D-NJ]
  - H.R.3600 — Census Accuracy Act of 2017 Rep. King, Steve [R-IA-4]
  - S.1946 — A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow unpopulated census tracts that are contiguous to low-income communities to be treated as low-income communities under the new markets tax credit. Sen. Menendez, Robert [D-NJ]
  - H.R.4906 — Ensuring Full Participation in the Census Act of 2018 Rep. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC]
  - H.R.5454 — Correct the Census Count Act: Rep. Clay, Wm. Lacy [D-MO-1]
  - H.R.2473 — Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2017 Rep. Wagner, Ann [R-MO-2]
  - H.Res.877 — Of inquiry directing the Secretary of Commerce to provide certain documents in the Secretary's possession to the House of Representatives relating to the decision to include a question on citizenship in the 2020 decennial census of population. Rep. Gomez, Jimmy [D-CA-34]
  - S.2580 — Every Person Counts Act Sen. Menendez, Robert [D-NJ]

## WHAT TECH CAN DO

The Census Bureau's plans to use digital tools to conduct the 2020 Census present enormous challenges and opportunities. Among them is the opportunity to support the civil rights community, which has long played a pivotal role in assuring that outreach efforts and the design and implementation of the Census maximize participation and accuracy. Adoption of technology to conduct the Census, and the potential challenges that will arise from the use of this technology, make it essential that the work of these organizations be as well-informed and strategic as possible. Key opportunities:

- Develop strategies to prepare for the possibility of technical failure when the Census is implemented.
- Provide guidance on security and other technical issues and adjust outreach accordingly.
- Provide digital literacy training to protect people who rely on library and other public computers.
- Leverage the tech private sector for additional outreach and support.