

**STATEMENT
OF
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FORMER ACTING LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

***INFORMATION POLICY, CENSUS, AND NATIONAL ARCHIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE***

***Field Hearing
Friday, April 30, 2010
1:00 p.m.
The Center for Healthy Communities
The California Endowment
1000 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, California***

“The 2010 Census: Participation of Hard to Count Communities in Non-Response Follow-Up”

Good afternoon, Chairman Clay and fellow members of the Committee. First, I want to thank you for holding this hearing in Los Angeles, as part of the kickoff to the non-response follow-up phase of the United States Census 2010. This is truly a monumental effort, and it is critical that we take advantage of every possible opportunity to remind the public of the importance of participating in the Census.

The challenge of the door-to-door canvass promises to be particularly daunting. We need to engage the least engaged. We need to gain the trust of those who have the most to fear. We need to educate those who are least likely to participate but often have the most

to lose. And we need to do so for every single family in California and all the great states of our nation.

During this phase, it will be critical that we remind everyone that Census data is 100% confidential. California residents' individual answers cannot be used by any other government agency, and census workers sign a lifetime agreement never to divulge the residents' information. So, to all Californians, I urge you, if a census taker knocks, please open your door.

It is my pleasure to join you this afternoon, along with other members of the panel, to discuss the role of state government generally, and California specifically, in the Census. My comments will focus primarily on the state's efforts in 2000 and so far in 2010, while John Perez, the Speaker of the California State Assembly, will discuss the state's efforts during non-response follow-up and make recommendations for the Census Bureau and Congress to consider for the future.

In 2000, California was extremely successful in implementing the first-of-its-kind, statewide, multi-lingual, and culturally appropriate, outreach effort. We spent \$24.7 million on our census effort, an investment that enabled us to achieve a Mail Participation rate of 73%. This was the first time in history that California's response rate outpaced that of the entire country, which came in at 72%.

For the 2010 Census, California and many other states did not have the surplus funds to spend on a comprehensive outreach effort, and the federal government has played a critical role, taking many of the best programs innovated in California and replicating them nationally. In California, we've also experienced the good fortune of having private foundations that have been willing to step forward and invest over \$9 million in outreach, including The California Endowment, the organization serving as our host today.

However, from our success in 2000, we knew that the State would need to play an active role in ensuring that a fully functional “intergovernmental” effort was coordinated and implemented. To that end, the state’s role has focused on CONVENING, COORDINATING, and COLLABORATING, our own version of CCC. With our very limited budget, California has invested \$1 million to fund the 13 Hardest to Count counties and help them coordinate their grassroots outreach efforts. These 13 counties have 80% of the hardest-to-count population in the state and have been asked to convene, coordinate, and collaborate with local community partners in their areas to ensure that outreach efforts are effectively focused and not duplicated. You will hear more about how counties used these funds from panelists who will speak later.

Our successful outreach in 2000 was focused around three critical elements:

- Trusted messengers—these are the folks who the Hard to Count populations are most likely to trust.
- Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs)—staffed by trusted messengers from the community and placed in locations in the community where the staff can help folks fill out the form and conduct the outreach effort.

- Microtargeted Media Outreach and locally created messages—We learned in 2000 that culturally appropriate ethnic media outlets are the best places to get the Census message out. Mainstream media, whether it be traditional or new, cannot substitute for local media targeted specifically to the people in these communities and their concerns.

Again, because of the limitations of state funding, many of these elements have been driven by efforts from the federal level in 2010. Both the Los Angeles Regional Census Center and the Seattle Regional Census Center have done a great job in hiring partnership specialists and assistants. In fact, the number of partnership specialists has nearly quadrupled in Northern California and increased tenfold in Southern California. Most importantly, the Census Centers have made a concerted effort to hire from within the community. These specialists have really tried to connect with trusted messengers throughout the state and at the grassroots level. The expansion and implementation of the partnership specialist program is a success of which this Committee should take note.

With regard to the Questionnaire Assistance Centers, although the US Census Bureau did hire from the community to staff their Questionnaire Assistance Centers, they were unable to adopt an element that we feel was critical to the success we realized in 2000. In 2000, the State contracted directly with Community Based Organizations and foundations that, in turn, not only implemented grassroots outreach, but also drove traffic to the QACs that they staffed. This meant that the QACs were more than just places for people to get their questions answered. They were places for the community to come together around the Census.

California specifically focused on the hardest-to-count census tracts and the undercount from 1990 while engaging CBOs, before making placement decisions. As a result, an analysis conducted by the state after the 2000 Census found that the “tracts with QACs funded by the California Complete Count Committee had populations that were hard to count in 1990, including high proportions of African Americans, Hispanics, renters, persons below poverty level and linguistically isolated households. These tracts improved their mail response rate by an impressive 8 percentage points (higher) in Census 2000.” So while we applaud the commitment from the Bureau, this Committee should recognize that, until the USCB has the legal standing and authority to directly invest in state/local governments and community-based organizations, the taxpayer will not receive the greatest return possible on the dollars invested.

The last critical factor from 2000 was the use of micro-targeted media and locally created messages. We know that the United States Census Bureau (USCB) spent over \$340 million for their integrated communications campaign (ICC) that included multilingual creative advertising and ethnic market media buys, in addition to mainstream market ads and buys. What we know from California’s multilingual advertising efforts in 2000 is that locally created advertising content is more effective than the “ethnic” advertisements created at a national level. For example, the ad copy and creative for Latinos in South Beach in Miami will not be effective in Los Angeles. The commercials created for Detroit may not resonate with in Oakland. Locally created content is just as important as the local ethnic media buys, themselves. To help the enumeration process that starts here in California tomorrow, we would, therefore, respectfully suggest that the USCB media

contractors allow the Regional Directors to have greater input NOT ONLY with regard to the local media buys, but also in crafting the actual creative messages.

The state has tried to address the lack of locally created advertising content by investing a small amount of funding to engage over 60 ethnic media outlets to place NRFU-related ads in the 60-70 census tracts with the lowest participation rate. Each ethnic media outlet has received a very small investment to allow them to create their own very targeted, culturally and geographically specific, advertisement/outreach effort that will, hopefully, impact the non-responding populations. The Ford Foundation also believes in very localized, targeted creative and has funded the same organization to implement these efforts in several other states. It is not too late to apply this and other lessons learned and encourage stronger partnerships with more tailored messages for the NRFU ads.

With that, I am happy to answer questions now, or, if you prefer, we can have Speaker Perez talk about the state's remaining efforts for 2010 and recommendations for the future.