

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Opening Statement Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney Hearing on “Providing the Census Bureau with the Time to Produce a Complete and Accurate Census” September 10, 2020

Good morning, and thank all you for joining us today, especially our witnesses.

This past April, the Trump Administration [asked](#) Congress to pass urgent legislation to extend several key statutory deadlines for the 2020 Census for about four months. This request was based on unprecedented delays caused by the coronavirus crisis. The President personally advocated for these extensions. He [said](#): “I think 120 days isn’t nearly enough.”

**The House responded quickly by passing these extensions on May 15th as part of the Heroes Act. I also [introduced](#) stand-alone legislation on May 27th—the Fair and Accurate Census Act—and the Senate introduced a companion bill.**

However, on July 28th, the Trump Administration seemed to reverse course. The Commerce Department told the Census Bureau it needed to deliver data to the President by the end of the year—and the Senate has failed to act to pass the time delay.

As a result, Census Bureau workers were forced to rewrite carefully considered plans over the course of a weekend. They had to cut field operations by a month, and they had to slash their data processing operations from five months to three.

Last week, I [released](#) an internal document. This document, showing that Census Bureau officials warned the Commerce Department about how these cuts would significantly damage the 2020 Census.

- They cautioned that, and I’m quoting from this report, “**eliminated activities**” will “**reduce accuracy.**”
- They highlighted that the compressed schedule, “**creates risk for serious errors not being discovered in the data.**”
- And they warned that these errors, “**may not be fixed**” because of “**the lack of time.**”

**There is strong bipartisan support for extending these deadlines in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. So why has the Trump Administration seemingly gone back on this request? Why did they ask for the extension—and why did they reverse themselves and**

**drop it? And why can't we give the Census Bureau officials the time that they need for an accurate and complete count of everyone?**

We do not have the full story. But the White House Chief of Staff, Mark Meadows, stated that the reason for this change was, and I quote, his quote is: “the Democrats just want to control the apportionment and we are not going to let them do that.”

His statement seems to forget that it was the Trump Administration that asked for this change in the first place, these extensions—not Democrats. It also seems to suggest that Donald Trump will not be President next year, so the Administration wants to control apportionment this year while he is still in office.

But there is a much bigger problem with his statement. **An undercount will directly harm states, and therefore people, across this country—including states with large populations who vote Republican.**

**An undercount will reduce the amount of funding those states are entitled to receive for healthcare, education, and transportation. Each year, we distribute over 1.5 trillion federal dollars to states based on Census data, and if the numbers are not correct, the payments to the communities are not correct or fair.**

**This is not a theoretical risk. Today, I am releasing several staff reports showing the negative impact on states with particularly hard-to-count populations: [Alabama](#), [Arizona](#), [Florida](#), [Georgia](#), [Kentucky](#), [Montana](#), [North Carolina](#), [South Carolina](#), [Texas](#), and [Utah](#).**

**These states—and others—could be directly harmed by the President's insistence on rushing an inaccurate count by December.**

That's why a number of Republican Senators have come out in support of extending the deadlines.

Let me quote from a [letter](#) that Senator Steve Daines from Montana sent to Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer urging them to pass legislation to extend the deadlines. He wrote, and I quote:

“Given the rural nature of Montana, and the additional challenges brought about by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, reverting the deadline back to September 30, 2020 will leave tens of thousands of Montanans uncounted and underrepresented at the federal level. Nearly half of the households in the state have yet to be counted. ... It is critical that a full and accurate census is completed and every Montanan is counted.”

**This should not be a partisan issue.** This is a Republican Senator from Montana. He supports the extensions because people from his state will lose federal funding to which they are entitled. Over 1.5 trillion dollars is distributed every year based on Census numbers and formulas to our states, our cities, and our people.

On Saturday, a federal judge [issued](#) an order temporarily halting efforts to end the Census early. **This is good news — but we should not wait for the courts to determine the fate of the Census.**

Last month, in this room, four former Census directors—one of whom, John Thompson, is here with us today—they [warned](#) that we cannot have an accurate Census using the current schedule. The coronavirus crisis has made that impossible.

**If you support full and fair federal funding for your state—if you support providing your constituents with healthcare, well-funded schools, hospitals, even roads and bridges—then you should support these extensions. They will ensure that your state is fully counted.**

**The Senate should do what the Trump Administration originally requested, and what the career professionals at the Census Bureau need: pass legislation to extend these deadlines and ensure a full, fair, and accurate Census for our country.**

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