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August 4, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

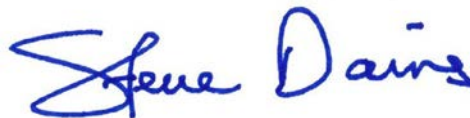
Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer,

I am writing to highlight the challenges faced by Montana in the current census and the need for an extension to the data collection deadline, as recently planned by the Census Bureau, until October 31, 2020.

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. This problem is especially alarming on our tribal lands where the response rate is as low as 5% in some areas and many residents only recently received invitations to participate. It is critical that a full and accurate census is completed and every Montanan is counted.

I would urge inclusion in any future relief package of an appropriate extension for transmittal of census data to the Administration in order for the October 31, 2020, deadline to remain intact. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator