



CHILDREN NOW



May 24, 2017

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Kevin de León  
President Pro Tempore, California  
State Senate  
State Capitol, Suite 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker, California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Urgent Request to Include \$3 Million in the 2017-18 Budget for 2020 Census Outreach and Planning**

Dear Governor Brown:

The Census Policy Advocacy Network thanks you and your staff for working with us on including \$3 million in the 2017-18 budget for 2020 Census outreach planning. We share your commitment to a fair and accurate census count in 2020 and appreciate your allocation of \$7 million in the 2017-18 budget for grants to local governments to encourage their participation in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program.

We write to reiterate our concern about the need to fund planning for census outreach in fiscal year 2017-18. Below are factors related to the 2020 Census that further explain the urgency and prudence of funding census outreach planning now. These factors should be considered before the 2017-18 budget is finalized in order to ensure that California is best positioned for a complete count and to receive its fair share of federal funding and congressional seats for the ten years that follow the upcoming decennial census.

**Billions of dollars in federal funding and at least one congressional seat are at stake.**

Accurate census data are key to the allocation of billions of dollars in federal funding, including an estimated \$400 billion annually across 26 federal agencies for tribal, state, and local government programs and services. California receives over \$73 billion annually in federal funds for schools, crime prevention, health care, and transportation. This amounts to about \$1,800 for every individual.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Finance estimates that California’s population will grow from about 37.3 million in 2010 to 40.7 million residents in 2020, an addition of about 3.4

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Finance, LUCA Informational Workshops Presentation, available at: [http://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/2020\\_Census/index.html](http://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/2020_Census/index.html).

million residents.<sup>2</sup> This means that California will need more, not fewer, financial resources from the federal government. An accurate census count is vital to ensuring that our state receives the funds it needs for the decade after 2020.

Similarly, accurate census data play a critical role in fair and representative reapportionment. Although California did not lose a congressional seat after the 2010 Census, it was the first time in our state's history that we did not gain a seat. Using three different population projection scenarios, the most recent and respected forecast of apportionment allocations predicts that California will neither gain nor lose a congressional seat after the 2020 Census.<sup>3</sup> But the prediction assumes a full census count in 2020 under all three scenarios. In the first scenario, California would lose a seat if it falls short by 240,685 people. And in the second and third scenarios, we would lose a seat if our census count is under by, respectively, 290,796 people and 536,693 people. These undercounts are not outside the realm of possibility. In fact, California is at high risk for an undercount in 2020.

### **California is at high risk for an undercount in 2020.**

To ensure that California receives its fair share of federal funding and political representation, the Census Bureau must count all of the state's residents accurately. However, certain factors are converging that will make it difficult for the Bureau to do that. These factors include:

1. **California's demographics:** Leading up to the 2010 Census, census experts ranked California as the "hardest-to-count" state in the country, with approximately 10,394,000 Californians living in hard-to-count areas.<sup>4</sup> The ranking was based on the Census Bureau's assessment of a census tract's likelihood of participating in the decennial census. The Bureau scored tracts based on an analysis of 12 variables, including percentage of racial and ethnic minorities, percentage of people below the poverty line, and percentage of immigrants and foreign born.<sup>5</sup>

The conditions that made California the hardest to count state in 2010 are still present. For example, California is still a majority-minority state. Based on 2015 population estimates, the state is about 38% White and 60.5% Non-White (14.7% Asian; 6.5% Black; 38.8% Latino; and 0.5% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, California has the highest percentage of people living in poverty when using the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure (20.6%), though it is about average when using the Bureau's Official Poverty Measure (15%).<sup>7</sup> Finally, California has the highest percentage of foreign-born residents (27%),<sup>8</sup> and in 2014, nearly half of California's children lived with one or more foreign-born parent (49.1%).<sup>9</sup> Conditions like these are unlikely to reverse by Census Day 2020.

2. **Shifts in how the census will be conducted:** The Census Bureau must comply with a Congressional mandate to conduct the 2020 Census at a lower cost per household than the 2010 Census. To achieve these cost savings, the Bureau plans to implement several "innovations" to the 2020 Census, including:
  - a. Using geographic information systems, aerial imagery, administrative records, and third-party data to update the Master Address File, instead of sending Census employees to walk and physically check 11 million census blocks;

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<sup>2</sup> California Department of Finance, P-1: State Population Projections (2010-2060): Total Population by County: (5-year increments), available at: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Projections/>.

<sup>3</sup> Election Data Services, Reapportionment Studies: 2016, available at: [https://www.electiondataservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/20161220-NR\\_Appor-16wTablesAndMaps.pdf](https://www.electiondataservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/20161220-NR_Appor-16wTablesAndMaps.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Is Your State Hard-to-Count?, available at: <http://www.civilrights.org/census/accurate-count/hard-to-count.html>.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, The U.S. Census Bureau Mail Return Rate Challenge: Crowdsourcing to Develop a Hard-to-Count Score, available at: <https://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/rrs2014-08.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts: California, available at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045216/06>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2015, available at: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-258.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts: California, available at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045216/06>.

<sup>9</sup> Data available at: <http://www.kidsdata.org/demographic/23/children-living-with-foreign-born-parents/summary#133/demographics>.

- b. Using the internet as the primary response option for the 2020 Census questionnaire, instead of primarily relying on paper responses;
- c. Expanding the use of administrative records and third-party data to develop targeted advertising, validate respondent addresses, and help guide in-person follow-up the Bureau conducts with individuals who do not initially submit on-line or paper questionnaires; and
- d. Reducing the number of staff who are involved in various field activities, and centralizing many Census operational components.

The Bureau's reliance on the internet as the primary response option is particularly problematic for California. The Bureau wants to make responding to the census questionnaire convenient. However, access to broadband (high-speed) internet will determine how convenient an internet response will be for an individual. Unfortunately, many hard-to-count populations in our state have limited access to broadband internet. A 2016 survey found that certain Californian adults are less likely than others to have broadband access through either a computing device (desktop, laptop or tablet computer) or a smart phone. For instance, African Americans (77%) and Asian Americans (81%) have lower rates of access than whites (90%); Spanish-speaking Latinos (69%) have much lower rates than English-speaking Latinos (90%); Californians with lower incomes (68%) have lower rates than those with higher incomes (97%); and non-high school graduates (63%) have much lower rates than college graduates (92%).<sup>10</sup> If racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic disparities in broadband access continue, we should expect millions of Californians to be, at best, discouraged by responding to the census questionnaire or, at worst, simply non-responsive.

3. **Shifts in the federal landscape:** Four shifts in national politics are increasing California's risk of an undercount:
  - a. ***Changes to federal immigration policy:*** President Donald Trump has issued several executive orders that make sweeping changes to our nation's immigration policy, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued memoranda detailing how the orders will be implemented. These orders call for a significant increase in immigration enforcement activity by the Administration, and broaden the categories of undocumented immigrants that will be considered priorities for deportation by the DHS. Additionally, a series of immigration enforcement activities in 2017 have incited immigrant fear and protests over the President's plans to implement the new priorities. In light of these changes, many immigrant families in California will be concerned that the federal government will use the census information they provide in a detrimental manner.
  - b. ***Islamophobia:*** Despite President Trump's shift in tone on Islam in his recent trip to Saudi Arabia, he has largely taken a hostile stance toward the religion and Muslims. In December 2015, as a presidential candidate, President Trump called for the "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States," and one of his first actions in office was to issue a controversial executive order that banned people from several Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States. These actions have generated fear and anxiety in Muslim communities, including in California, which has the second largest number of Mosques in the country.<sup>11</sup> This fear and anxiety could have ripple effects and dampen Muslim participation in the census.
  - c. ***Continued underfunding of the Census Bureau:*** Congress recently passed an appropriations bill that will fund federal agencies through the end of this fiscal year on September 30, 2017. The bill funds the Census Bureau at \$1.47 billion, which is \$164 million below what the Obama Administration had requested for the Bureau and \$161 million below what the Bureau estimated it needed for the fiscal year. This funding level represents a trend of underfunding the Bureau instead of providing it with the ramp up in funding necessary to carry out time-sensitive, cost-saving activities leading up to the decennial census.

<sup>10</sup> California Emerging Technology Fund, *Interconnectivity and the 'Digital Divide' in California Households: 2016*, available at: [http://www.cetfund.org/files/CETF\\_Annual\\_Survey\\_2016.pdf](http://www.cetfund.org/files/CETF_Annual_Survey_2016.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Ihsan Bagby, *The American Mosque 2011*, available at: <https://www.cair.com/images/pdf/The-American-Mosque-2011-part-1.pdf>.

Although there is now clarity about funding for the 2017 fiscal year, funding uncertainties already forced the Bureau to modify planning and preparation activities: Tests to evaluate new enumeration methods were cancelled and the opening of three out of six Regional Census Centers was delayed. Without sufficient funding moving forward, the Bureau may have to modify additional activities, including the 2018 Census End-to-End Test that assesses the integration of critical systems and operations.

- d. ***Resignation of Director John H. Thompson:*** Earlier this month, the Department of Commerce announced that John H. Thompson will step down as Director of the Census Bureau at the end of June. As a recent *Time* article reported, Thompson's resignation leaves the Bureau with a leadership void that will (1) slow down planning and testing, (2) leave the Bureau without a respected leader to advocate for adequate funding from Congress and the White House, and (3) potentially erode confidence in the census.<sup>12</sup>

Given all of these factors, we believe that California is at high risk for an undercount in the 2020 Census and therefore the state must carry out a robust census outreach campaign, combining and building on the best practices learned from the 2000 and 2010 campaigns.

### **The state must begin planning its census outreach campaign in fiscal year 2017-18.**

A statewide census outreach campaign is a massive effort, involving multiple pieces of infrastructure and hundreds of governmental and non-governmental partners. In 2012, the 2010 California Complete Count Committee provided a recommended timeline for planning and implementing the 2020 Census outreach effort. According to that timeline, the state's outreach campaign should happen in three phases: (1) a planning and infrastructure building phase from 2013 to 2017; (2) a partnership engagement phase from 2018 to 2019; and (3) a critical outreach phase in 2020.<sup>13</sup> If the state allows this upcoming fiscal year to pass without any preparation for census outreach, then planning and infrastructure building will begin precisely when they should have been completed. Considering existing time constraints, the state will inevitably have to sacrifice some of the activities recommended by the 2010 committee. A further delay in planning will require that additional activities be sacrificed or scaled back, further threatening how robust the campaign can be.

We are especially concerned about the development of the state's technology systems for outreach, which include websites, social media, and a centralized database. These systems will be the campaign's backbone and will need to be in place prior to intensive engagement and trainings with governmental and non-governmental partners. Based on communication with the Department of Technology, developing these types of systems requires 18-36 months. Thus, assuming that (1) funding is allocated in fiscal year 2018-19 for technology development, (2) the development process begins immediately, and (3) the process is flawless, partners will be able to learn how to use the technology systems in January 2020. These assumptions could very well turn out to be false, but even if they hold true, January 2020 is the time when governmental and non-governmental partners should be intensifying outreach efforts, not learning how to use the technology that will support and facilitate those efforts.

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<sup>12</sup> Haley Sweetland Edwards, "The Head of the Census Resigned. It Could Be as Serious as James Comey," *Time*, May 12, 2017, available at: <http://time.com/4774288/census-bureau-john-thompson-resigned/>.

<sup>13</sup> Center for Collaborative Policy at California State University, Sacramento, *California Complete Count: Counting 2010 and Planning for 2020, Final Report and Highlights*, available at: [http://www.csus.edu/ccp/documents/client\\_documents/census\\_highlights\\_final\\_09\\_07\\_12.pdf](http://www.csus.edu/ccp/documents/client_documents/census_highlights_final_09_07_12.pdf).

Considering the stakes of an accurate 2020 Census count, the high risk of an undercount of our state's hard-to-count populations, and the activities that would have to be sacrificed or scaled back if another year passes without any outreach planning, we urge you to include \$3 million in the 2017-18 budget for planning related to the state's 2020 Census outreach campaign. We look forward to discussing our concerns and working with you further to ensure that all Californians are counted in 2020. Please contact Khydeeja Alam Javid with Advancement Project California if you have any questions. She can be reached at [kalam@advanceproj.org](mailto:kalam@advanceproj.org) or 916-441-3973.

Sincerely,

Advancement Project California  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice- California  
Children Now  
Council on American Islamic Relations – California  
Mi Familia Vota- Education Fund  
NALEO Educational Fund  
PICO California

CC: The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair of the Senate Budget Committee  
The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee  
Members, Committee on Senate Budget and Fiscal Review  
Members, Committee on Assembly Budget  
Executive Secretary Nancy McFadden, Office of Governor Brown  
Cabinet Secretary Keely Bosler, Office of Governor Brown  
Jamie Callahan, Director of External Affairs, Office of Governor Brown  
Dan Torres, Director of Immigrant Integration, Office of Governor Brown  
Michael Cohen, Director of Department of Finance